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*“ One hundred francs, Coralie! ”*

**THE WORKS OF**  
**HONORÉ DE BALZAC**

**WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY**  
**GEORGE SAINTSBURY**

**IN EIGHTEEN VOLUMES**

**VOLUME IX**

**DISTINGUISHED**  
**PROVINCIAL AT PARIS**  
**LILY OF THE VALLEY**  
**THE VENDETTA**

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**NEW YORK**



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**A DISTINGUISHED PROVINCIAL AT  
PARIS**





## PREFACE

THE central part of *Illusions Perdues*, which in reason stands by itself, and may do so ostensibly with considerably less than the introduction explanatory which Balzac often gives to his own books, is one of the most carefully worked out and diversely important of his novels. It should, of course, be read before *Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes*, which is avowedly its second part, a small piece of *Eve et David* serving as the link between them. But it is almost sufficient by and to itself. *Lucien de Rubempré ou le Journalisme* would be the most straightforward and descriptive title for it, and one which Balzac in some of his moods would have been content enough to use.

The story of it is too continuous and interesting to need elaborate argument, for nobody is likely to miss any important link in it. But Balzac has nowhere excelled in  *finesse* and success of analysis, the double disillusion which introduces itself at once between Mme. de Bargeton and Lucien, and which makes any *redintegratio amoris* of a valid kind impossible, because each cannot but be aware that the other has anticipated the rupture. It will not, perhaps, be matter of such general agreement whether he has or has not exceeded the fair license of the novelist in attributing to Lucien those charms of body and gifts of mind which make him, till his moral weakness and worthlessness are exposed, irresistible, and enable him for a time to repair his faults by a sort of fairy good-luck. The sonnets of *Les Marguerites*, which were given to the author by poetical friends—Gautier, it is said, supplied the "Tulip"—are undoubtedly good and sufficient. But Lucien's first article, which is (according to a practice the rashness of which cannot be too much deprecated) given likewise, is certainly not very wonderful; and the Paris press must have been rather at a low ebb if it made any sensation. As we are not favored with any actual portrait of Lucien, detection is less possible here, but the nov-

elist has perhaps a very little abused the privilege of making a hero, "Like Paris handsome, and like Hector brave," or rather, "Like Paris handsome, and like Phœbus clever." There is no doubt, however, that the interest of the book lies partly in the vivid and severe picture of journalism given in it, and partly in the way in which the character of Lucien is adjusted to show up that of the abstract journalist still farther.

How far is this picture true? It must be said, in fairness to Balzac, that a good many persons of some competence in France have pronounced for its truth there; and if that be so, all one can say is, "So much the worse for French journalists." It is also certain that a lesser, but still not inconsiderable number of persons in England—generally persons who, not perhaps with Balzac's genius, have like Balzac published books, and are not satisfied with their reception by the press—agree more or less as to England. For myself, I can only say that I do not believe things have ever been quite so bad in England, and that I am quite sure there never has been any need for them to be. There are, no doubt, spiteful, unprincipled, incompetent practitioners of journalism as of everything else; and it is of course obvious that while advertisements, the favor of the chiefs of parties, and so forth, are temptations to newspaper managers not to hold up a very high standard of honor, anonymity affords to newspaper writers a dangerously easy shield to cover malice or dishonesty. But I can only say that during long practice in every kind of political and literary journalism, I never was seriously asked to write anything I did not think, and never had the slightest difficulty in confining myself to what I did think.

In fact Balzac, like a good many other men of letters who abuse journalism, put himself very much out of court by continually practicing it, not merely during his struggling period, but long after he had made his name, indeed almost to the very last. And it is very hard to resist the conclusion that when he charged journalism generally not merely with envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, but with hopeless and pervading dishonesty, he had little more ground

for it than an inability to conceive how anyone, except from vile reasons of this kind, could fail to praise Honoré de Balzac.

At any rate, either his art by itself, or his art assisted and strengthened by that personal feeling which, as we have seen, counted for much with him, has here produced a wonderfully vivid piece of fiction—one, I think, inferior in success to hardly anything he has done. Whether, as at a late period a very well informed, well affected, and well equipped critic hinted, his picture of the Luciens and the Lousteaus did not a little to propagate both is another matter. The seriousness with which Balzac took the accusation perhaps shows a little sense of galling. But, putting this aside, *Un Grand Homme de Province à Paris* must be ranked, both for comedy and tragedy, both for scheme and execution, in the first rank of his work.

(For bibliography, see Preface to *Lost Illusions*.)

G. S.



## A DISTINGUISHED PROVINCIAL AT PARIS

### *PART I*

**M**ME. DE BARGETON and Lucien de Rubempré had left Angoulême behind, and were traveling together upon the road to Paris. Not one of the party who made that journey alluded to it afterwards; but it may be believed that an infatuated youth who had looked forward to the delights of an elopement, must have found the continual presence of Gentil, the manservant, and Albertine, the maid, not a little irksome on the way. Lucien, traveling post for the first time in his life, was horrified to see pretty nearly the whole sum on which he meant to live in Paris for a twelvemonth dropped along the road. Like other men who combine great intellectual powers with the charming simplicity of childhood, he openly expressed his surprise at the new and wonderful things which he saw, and thereby made a mistake. A man should study a woman very carefully before he allows her to see his thoughts and emotions as they arise in him. A woman, whose nature is large as her heart is tender, can smile upon childishness and make allowances; but let her have ever so small a spice of vanity herself, and she cannot forgive childishness, or littleness, or vanity in her lover. Many a woman is so extravagant a worshiper that she must always see the god in her idol; but there are yet others who love a man for his sake and not for their own, and adore his failings with his greater qualities.

Lucien had not guessed as yet that Mme. de Bargeton's love was grafted on pride. He made another mistake when he failed to discern the meaning of certain smiles which flitted over Louise's lips from time to time; and instead of keeping himself to himself, he indulged in the playfulness of the young rat emerging from his hole for the first time.

The travelers were set down before daybreak at the sign of the Gaillard-Bois in the Rue de l'Échelle, both so tired

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out with the journey that Louise went straight to bed and slept, first bidding Lucien to engage the room immediately overhead. Lucien slept on till four o'clock in the afternoon, when he was awakened by Mme. de Bargeton's servant, and learning the hour, made a hasty toilet and hurried downstairs.

Louise was sitting in the shabby inn sitting-room. Hotel accommodation is a blot on the civilization of Paris; for with all its pretensions to elegance, the city as yet does not boast a single inn where a well-to-do traveler can find the surroundings to which he is accustomed at home. To Lucien's just-awakened, sleep-dimmed eyes, Louise was hardly recognizable in this cheerless, sunless room, with the shabby window-curtains, the comfortless polished floor, the hideous furniture bought second-hand, or much the worse for wear.

Some people no longer look the same when detached from the background of faces, objects, and surroundings which serve as a setting, without which, indeed, they seem to lose something of their intrinsic worth. Personality demands its appropriate atmosphere to bring out its values, just as the figures in Flemish interiors need the arrangement of light and shade in which they are placed by the painter's genius if they are to live for us. This is especially true of provincials. Mme. de Bargeton, moreover, looked more thoughtful and dignified than was necessary now, when no barriers stood between her and happiness.

Gentil and Albertine waited upon them, and while they were present Lucien could not complain. The dinner, sent in from a neighboring restaurant, fell far below the provincial average, both in quantity and quality; the essential goodness of country fare was wanting, and in point of quantity the portions were cut with so strict an eye to business that they savored of short commons. In such small matters Paris does not show its best side to travelers of moderate fortune. Lucien waited till the meal was over. Some change had come over Louise, he thought, but he could not explain it.

And a change had, in fact, taken place. Events had occurred while he slept; for reflection is an event in our inner history, and Mme. de Bargeton had been reflecting.

About two o'clock that afternoon, Sixte du Châtelet made

his appearance in the Rue de l'Échelle and asked for Albertine. The sleeping damsel was aroused, and to her he expressed his wish to speak with her mistress. Mme. de Bargeton had scarcely time to dress before he came back again. The unaccountable apparition of M. du Châtelet roused the lady's curiosity, for she had kept her journey a profound secret, as she thought. At three o'clock the visitor was admitted.

"I have risked a reprimand from headquarters to follow you," he said, as he greeted her; "I foresaw coming events. But if I lose my post for it, *you*, at any rate, shall not be lost."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Mme. de Bargeton.

"I can see plainly that you love Lucien," he continued, with an air of tender resignation. "You must love indeed if *you* can act thus recklessly, and disregard the conventions which you know so well. Dear adored Naïs, can you really imagine that Mme. d'Espard's salon, or any other salon in Paris, will not be closed to you as soon as it is known that you have fled from Angoulême, as it were, with a young man, especially after the duel between M. de Bargeton and M. de Chandour? The fact that your husband has gone to the Escarbas looks like a separation. Under such circumstances a gentleman fights first and afterwards leaves his wife at liberty. By all means, give M. de Rubempré your love and your countenance; do just as you please; but you must not live in the same house. If anybody here in Paris knew that you had traveled together, the whole world that you have a mind to see would point the finger at you.

"And, Naïs, do not make these sacrifices for a young man whom you have as yet compared with no one else; he, on his side, has been put to no proof; he may forsake you for some Parisienne, better able, as he may fancy, to further his ambitions. I mean no harm to the man you love, but you will permit me to put your own interests before his, and to beg you to study him, to be fully aware of the serious nature of this step that you are taking. And, then, if you find all doors closed against you, and that none of the women call upon you, make sure at least that you will feel no regret



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for all that you have renounced for him. Be very certain first that he for whom you will have given up so much will always be worthy of your sacrifices and appreciate them.

"Just now," continued Châtelet, "Mme. d'Espard is the more prudish and particular because she herself is separated from her husband, nobody knows why. The Navarreins, the Lenoncourts, the Blamont-Chauvrys, and the rest of the relations have all rallied round her; the most strait-laced women are seen at her house, and receive her with respect, and the Marquis d'Espard has been put in the wrong. The first call that you pay will make it clear to you that I am right; indeed, knowing Paris as I do, I can tell you beforehand that you will no sooner enter the Marquise's salon than you will be in despair lest she should find out that you are staying at the Gaillard-Bois with an apothecary's son, though he may wish to be called M. de Rubempré.

"You will have rivals here, women far more astute and shrewd than Amélie; they will not fail to discover who you are, where you are, where you come from, and all that you are doing. You have counted upon your incognito, I see, but you are one of those women for whom an incognito is out of the question. You will meet Angoulême at every turn. There are the deputies from the Charente coming up for the opening of the session; there is the Commandant in Paris on leave. Why, the first man or woman from Angoulême who happens to see you would cut your career short in a strange fashion. You would simply be Lucien's mistress.

"If you need me at any time, I am staying with the Receiver-General in the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, two steps away from Mme. d'Espard's. I am sufficiently acquainted with the Maréchale de Carigliano, Mme. de Sérizy, and the President of the Council to introduce you to those houses; but you will meet so many people at Mme. d'Espard's, that you are not likely to require me. So far from wishing to gain admittance to this set or that, everyone will be longing to make your acquaintance."

Châtelet talked on; Mme. de Bargeton made no interruption. She was struck with his perspicacity. The queen of

Angoulême had, in fact, counted upon preserving her incognito.

"You are right, my dear friend," she said at length; "but what am I to do?"

"Allow me to find suitable furnished lodgings for you," suggested Châtelet; "that way of living is less expensive than an inn. You will have a home of your own; and, if you will take my advice, you will sleep in your new rooms this very night."

"But how did you know my address?" queried she.

"Your traveling carriage is easily recognized; and, besides, I was following you. At Sèvres your postilion told mine that he had brought you here. Will you permit me to act as your harbinger? I will write as soon as I have found lodgings."

"Very well, do so," said she. And in those seemingly insignificant words, all was said. The Baron du Châtelet had spoken the language of worldly wisdom to a woman of the world. He had made his appearance before her in faultless dress, a neat cab was waiting for him at the door; and Mme. de Bargeton, standing by the window thinking over the position, chanced to see the elderly dandy drive away.

A few moments later Lucien appeared, half awake and hastily dressed. He was handsome, it is true; but his clothes, his last year's nankeen trousers, and his shabby tight jacket were ridiculous. Put Antinous or the Apollo Belvedere himself into a water-carrier's blouse, and how shall you recognize the godlike creature of the Greek or Roman chisel? The eyes note and compare before the heart has time to revise the swift involuntary judgment; and the contrast between Lucien and Châtelet was so abrupt that it could not fail to strike Louise.

Towards six o'clock that evening, when dinner was over, Mme. de Bargeton beckoned Lucien to sit beside her on the shabby sofa, covered with a flowered chintz—a yellow pattern on a red ground.

"Lucien mine," she said, "don't you think that if we have both of us done a foolish thing, suicidal for both our interests, it would only be common-sense to set matters right? We

ought not to live together in Paris, dear boy, and we must not allow anyone to suspect that we traveled together. Your career depends so much upon my position that I ought to do nothing to spoil it. So, to-night, I am going to remove into lodgings nearby. But you will stay on here, we can see each other every day, and nobody can say a word against us."

And Louise explained conventions to Lucien, who opened wide eyes. He had still to learn that when a woman thinks better of her folly, she thinks better of her love; but one thing he understood—he saw that he was no longer the Lucien of Angoulême. Louise talked of herself, of *her* interests, *her* reputation, and of the world; and, to veil her egoism, she tried to make him believe that this was all on his account. He had no claim upon Louise thus suddenly retransformed into Mme. de Bargeton, and, more serious still, he had no power over her. He could not keep back the tears that filled his eyes.

"If I am your glory," cried the poet, "you are yet more to me—you are my one hope, my whole future rests with you. I thought that if you meant to make my success yours, you would surely make my adversity yours also, and here we are going to part already."

"You are judging my conduct," said she; "you do not love me."

Lucien looked at her with such a dolorous expression, that, in spite of herself, she said—

"Darling, I will stay if you like. We shall both be ruined, we shall have no one to come to our aid. But when we are both equally wretched, and everyone shuts their door upon us both; when failure (for we must look all possibilities in the face), when failure drives us back to the Escarbas, then, remember, love, that I foresaw the end, and that at the first I proposed that we should make your way by conforming to established rules."

"Louise," he cried, with his arms round her, "you are wise; you frighten me! Remember that I am a child, that I have given myself up entirely to your dear will. I myself should have preferred to overcome obstacles and win my way

among men by the power that is in me; but if I can reach the goal sooner through your aid, I shall be very glad to owe all my success to you. Forgive me! You mean so much to me that I cannot help fearing all kinds of things; and, for me, parting means that desertion is at hand, and desertion is death."

"But, my dear boy, the world's demands are soon satisfied," returned she. "You must sleep here; that is all. All day long you will be with me, and no one can say a word."

A few kisses set Lucien's mind completely at rest. An hour later Gentil brought in a note from Châtelet. He told Mme. de Bargeton that he had found lodgings for her in the Rue Neuve-de-Luxembourg. Mme. de Bargeton informed herself of the exact place, and found that it was not very far from the Rue de l'Échelle. "We shall be neighbors," she told Lucien.

Two hours afterwards Louise stepped into the hired carriage sent by Châtelet for the removal to the new rooms. The apartments were of the class that upholsterers furnish and let to wealthy deputies and persons of consideration on a short visit to Paris—showy and uncomfortable. It was eleven o'clock when Lucien returned to his inn, having seen nothing as yet of Paris except the part of the Rue Saint-Honoré which lies between the Rue Neuve-de-Luxembourg and the Rue de l'Échelle. He lay down in his miserable little room, and could not help comparing it in his own mind with Louise's sumptuous apartments.

Just as he came away the Baron du Châtelet came in, gorgeously arrayed in evening dress, fresh from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to inquire whether Mme. de Bargeton was satisfied with all that he had done on her behalf. Naïs was uneasy. The splendor was alarming to her mind. Provincial life had reacted upon her; she was painfully conscientious over her accounts, and economical to a degree that is looked upon as miserly in Paris. She had brought with her twenty thousand francs in the shape of a draft on the Receiver-General, considering that the sum would more than cover the expenses of four years in Paris; she was afraid already lest she should not have enough, and should run into

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debt; and now Châtelet told her that her rooms would only cost six hundred francs per month.

"A mere trifle," added he, seeing that Naïs was startled. "For five hundred francs a month you can have a carriage from a livery stable; fifty louis in all. You need only think of your dress. A woman moving in good society could not well do less; and if you mean to obtain a Receiver-General's appointment for M. de Bargeton, or a post in the Household, you ought not to look poverty-stricken. Here, in Paris, they only give to the rich. It is most fortunate that you brought Gentil to go out with you, and Albertine for your own woman, for servants are enough to ruin you here. But with your introductions you will seldom be at home to a meal."

Mme. de Bargeton and the Baron du Châtelet chatted about Paris. Châtelet gave her all the news of the day, the myriad nothings that you are bound to know, under penalty of being a nobody. Before very long the Baron also gave advice as to shopping, recommending Herbault for toques and Juliette for hats and bonnets; he added the address of a fashionable dressmaker to supersede Victorine. In short, he made the lady see the necessity of rubbing off Angoulême. Then he took his leave after a final flash of happy inspiration.

"I expect I shall have a box at one of the theaters tomorrow," he remarked carelessly; "I will call for you and M. de Rubempré, for you must allow me to do the honors of Paris."

"There is more generosity in his character than I thought," said Mme. de Bargeton to herself when Lucien was included in the invitation.

In the month of June ministers are often puzzled to know what to do with boxes at the theater; ministerialist deputies and their constituents are busy in their vineyards or harvest fields, and their more exacting acquaintances are in the country or traveling about; so it comes to pass that the best seats are filled at this season with heterogeneous theater-goers, never seen at any other time of year, and the house is apt to look as if it were tapestried with very shabby material. Châtelet had thought already that this was his opportunity

of giving Naïs the amusements which provincials crave most eagerly, and that with very little expense.

The next morning, the very first morning in Paris, Lucien went to the Rue Neuve-de-Luxembourg and found that Louise had gone out. She had gone to make some indispensable purchases, to take counsel of the mighty and illustrious authorities in the matter of the feminine toilette, pointed out to her by Châtelet, for she had written to tell the Marquise d'Espard of her arrival. Mme. de Bargeton possessed the self-confidence born of a long habit of rule, but she was exceedingly afraid of appearing to be provincial. She had tact enough to know how greatly the relations of women among themselves depend upon first impressions; and though she felt that she was equal to taking her place at once in such a distinguished set as Mme. d'Espard's, she felt also that she stood in need of goodwill at her first entrance into society, and was resolved, in the first place, that she would leave nothing undone to secure success. So she felt boundlessly thankful to Châtelet for pointing out these ways of putting herself in harmony with the fashionable world.

A singular chance so ordered it that the Marquise was delighted to find an opportunity of being useful to a connection of her husband's family. The Marquis d'Espard had withdrawn himself without apparent reason from society, and ceased to take any active interest in affairs, political or domestic. His wife, thus left mistress of her actions, felt the need of the support of public opinion, and was glad to take the Marquis's place and give her countenance to one of her husband's relations. She meant to be ostentatiously gracious, so as to put her husband more evidently in the wrong; and that very day she wrote "Mme. de Bargeton *née* Nègrepelisse" a charming billet, one of the prettily worded compositions of which time alone can discover the emptiness.

"She was delighted that circumstances had brought a relative, of whom she had heard, whose acquaintance she had desired to make, into closer connection with her family. Friendships in Paris were not so solid but that she longed to find one more to love on earth; and if this might not be, there would

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only be one more illusion to bury with the rest. She put herself entirely at her cousin's disposal. She would have called upon her if indisposition had not kept her to the house, and she felt that she lay already under obligations to the cousin who had thought of her."

Lucien, meanwhile, taking his first ramble along the Rue de la Paix and through the boulevards, like all newcomers, was much more interested in the things that he saw than in the people he met. The general effect of Paris is wholly engrossing at first. The wealth in the shop windows, the high houses, the streams of traffic, the contrast everywhere between the last extremes of luxury and want struck him more than anything else. In his astonishment at the crowds of strange faces, the man of imaginative temper felt as if he himself had shrunk, as it were, immensely. A man of any consequence in his native place, where he cannot go out but he meets with some recognition of his importance at every step, does not readily accustom himself to the sudden and total extinction of his consequence. You are somebody in your own country, in Paris you are nobody. The transition between the first state and the last should be made gradually, for the too abrupt fall is something like annihilation. Paris could not fail to be an appalling wilderness for a young poet, who looked for an echo for all his sentiments, a confidant for all his thoughts, a soul to share his least sensations.

Lucien had not gone in search of his luggage and his best blue coat; and painfully conscious of the shabbiness, to say no worse, of his clothes, he went to Mme. de Bargeton, feeling sure that she must have returned. He found the Baron du Châtelet, who carried them both off to dinner at the Rocher de Cancale. Lucien's head was dizzy with the whirl of Paris, the Baron was in the carriage, he could say nothing to Louise, but he squeezed her hand, and she gave a warm response to the mute confidence.

After dinner Châtelet took his guests to the Vaudeville. Lucien, in his heart, was not over well pleased to see Châtelet again, and cursed the chance that had brought the Baron to Paris. The Baron said that ambition had brought him to

town; he had hopes of an appointment as secretary-general to a government department, and meant to take a seat in the Council of State as Master of Requests. He had come to Paris to ask for fulfillment of the promises that had been given him, for a man of his stamp could not be expected to remain a comptroller all his life; he would rather be nothing at all, and offer himself for election as deputy, or re-enter diplomacy. Châtelet grew visibly taller; Lucien dimly began to recognize in this elderly beau the superiority of the man of the world who knows Paris; and, most of all, he felt ashamed to owe his evening's amusement to his rival. And while the poet looked ill at ease and awkward, Her Royal Highness's ex-secretary was quite in his element. He smiled at his rival's hesitations, at his astonishment, at the questions he put, at the little mistakes which the latter ignorantly made, much as an old salt laughs at an apprentice who has not found his sea legs; but Lucien's pleasure at seeing a play for the first time in Paris outweighed the annoyance of these small humiliations.

That evening marked an epoch in Lucien's career; he put away a good many of his ideas as to provincial life in the course of it. His horizon widened; society assumed different proportions. There were fair Parisiennes in fresh and elegant toilettes all about him; Mme. de Bargeton's costume, tolerably ambitious though it was, looked dowdy by comparison; the material, like the fashion and the color, was out of date. That way of arranging her hair, so bewitching in Angoulême, looked frightfully ugly here among the daintily devised coiffures which he saw in every direction.

"Will she always look like that?" said he to himself, ignorant that the morning had been spent in preparing a transformation.

In the provinces comparison and choice are out of the question; when a face has grown familiar it comes to possess a certain beauty that is taken for granted. But transport the pretty woman of the provinces to Paris, and no one takes the slightest notice of her; her prettiness is of the comparative degree illustrated by the saying that among the blind the one-eyed are kings. Lucien's eyes were now busy comparing Mme. de Bargeton with other women, just as she herself had



contrasted him with Châtelet on the previous day. And Mme. de Bargeton, on her part, permitted herself some strange reflections upon her lover. The poet cut a poor figure notwithstanding his singular beauty. The sleeves of his jacket were too short; with his ill-cut country gloves and a waistcoat too scanty for him, he looked prodigiously ridiculous, compared with the young men in the balcony—"positively pitiable," thought Mme. de Bargeton. Châtelet, interested in her without presumption, taking care of her in a manner that revealed a profound passion; Châtelet, elegant, and as much at home as an actor treading the familiar boards of his theater, in two days had recovered all the ground lost in the past six months.

Ordinary people will not admit that our sentiments towards each other can totally change in a moment, and yet certain it is, that two lovers not seldom fly apart even more quickly than they drew together. In Mme. de Bargeton and in Lucien a process of disenchantment was at work; Paris was the cause. Life had widened out before the poet's eyes, as society came to wear a new aspect for Louise. Nothing but an accident now was needed to sever finally the bond that united them; nor was that blow, so terrible for Lucien, very long delayed.

Mme. de Bargeton set Lucien down at his inn, and drove home with Châtelet, to the intense vexation of the luckless lover.

"What will they say about me?" he wondered, as he climbed the stairs to his dismal room.

"That poor fellow is uncommonly dull," said Châtelet, with a smile, when the door was closed.

"That is the way with those who have a world of thoughts in their heart and brain. Men who have so much in them to give out in great works long dreamed of, profess a certain contempt for conversation, a commerce in which the intellect spends itself in small change," returned the haughty Nègrepelisse. She still had courage to defend Lucien, but less for Lucien's sake than for her own.

"I grant it you willingly," replied the Baron, "but we live with human beings and not with books. There, dear Naïs!

I see how it is, there is nothing between you yet, and I am delighted that it is so. If you decide to bring an interest of a kind hitherto lacking into your life, let it not be this, so-called genius, I implore you. How if you have made a mistake? Suppose that in a few days' time, when you have compared him with men whom you will meet, men of real ability, men who have distinguished themselves in good earnest; suppose that you should discover, dear and fair siren, that it is no lyre-bearer that you have borne into port on your dazzling shoulders, but a little ape, with no manners and no capacity; a presumptuous fool who may be a wit in L'Houmeau, but turns out a very ordinary specimen of a young man in Paris? And, after all, volumes of verse come out every week here, the worst of them better than all M. Chardon's poetry put together. For pity's sake, wait and compare! To-morrow, Friday, is Opéra night," he continued, as the carriage turned into the Rue Neuve-de-Luxembourg; "Mme. d'Espard has the box of the First Gentlemen of the Chamber, and will take you, no doubt. I shall go to Mme. de Sérizy's box to behold you in your glory. They are giving *Les Danaïdes*."

"Good-by," said she.

Next morning Mme. de Bargeton tried to arrange a suitable toilette in which to call on her cousin, Mme. d'Espard. The weather was rather chilly. Looking through the dowdy wardrobe from Angoulême, she found nothing better than a certain green velvet gown, trimmed fantastically enough. Lucien, for his part, felt that he must go at once for his celebrated blue best coat; he felt aghast at the thought of his tight jacket, and determined to be well dressed, lest he should meet the Marquise d'Espard or receive a sudden summons to her house. He must have his luggage at once, so he took a cab, and in two hours' time spent three or four francs, matter for much subsequent reflection on the scale of the cost of living in Paris. Having dressed himself in his best, such as it was, he went to the Rue Neuve-de-Luxembourg, and on the doorstep encountered Gentil in company with a gorgeously befeathered chasseur.

"I was just going round to you, sir, madame gave me a

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line for you," said Gentil, ignorant of Parisian forms of respect, and accustomed to homely provincial ways. The chasseur took the poet for a servant.

Lucien tore open the note, and learned that Mme. de Bargeton had gone to spend the day with the Marquise d'Espard. She was going to the Opéra in the evening, but she told Lucien to be there to meet her. Her cousin permitted her to give him a seat in her box. The Marquise d'Espard was delighted to procure the young poet that pleasure.

"Then she loves me! my fears were all nonsense!" said Lucien to himself. "She is going to present me to her cousin this very evening."

He jumped for joy. He would spend the day that separated him from the happy evening as joyously as might be. He dashed out in the direction of the Tuileries, dreaming of walking there until it was time to dine at Véry's. And now, behold Lucien frisking and skipping, light of foot because light of heart, on his way to the Terrasse des Feuillants to take a look at the people of quality on promenade there. Pretty women walk arm in arm with men of fashion, their adorers, couples greet each other with a glance as they pass; how different it is from the terrace at Beaulieu! How far finer the birds on this perch than the Angoulême species! It is as if you beheld all the colors that glow in the plumage of the feathered tribes of India and America, instead of the sober European families.

Those were two wretched hours that Lucien spent in the Garden of the Tuileries. A violent revulsion swept through him, and he sat in judgment upon himself.

In the first place, not a single one of these gilded youths wore a swallow-tailed coat. The few exceptions, one or two poor wretches, a clerk here and there, an annuitant from the Marais, could be ruled out on the score of age; and hard upon the discovery of a distinction between morning and evening dress, the poet's quick sensibility and keen eyes saw likewise that his shabby old clothes were not fit to be seen; the defects in his coat branded that garment as ridiculous; the cut was old-fashioned, the color was the wrong shade of blue, the collar outrageously ungainly, the coat tails, by dint

of long wear, overlapped each other, the buttons were reddened, and there were fatal white lines along the seams. Then his waistcoat was too short, and so grotesquely provincial, that he hastily buttoned his coat over it; and, finally, no man of any pretension to fashion wore nankeen trousers. Well-dressed men wore charming fancy materials or immaculate white, and everyone had straps to his trousers, while the shrunken hems of Lucien's nether garments manifested a violent antipathy for the heels of boots which they wedded with obvious reluctance. Lucien wore a white cravat with embroidered ends; his sister had seen that M. du Hautoy and M. de Chandour wore such things, and hastened to make similar ones for her brother. Here, no one appeared to wear white cravats of a morning except a few grave seniors, elderly capitalists, and austere public functionaries, until, in the street on the other side of the railings, Lucien noticed a grocer's boy walking along the Rue de Rivoli with a basket on his head; him the man of Angoulême detected in the act of sporting a cravat, with both ends adorned by the handiwork of some adored shop-girl. The sight was a stab to Lucien's breast; penetrating straight to that organ as yet undefined, the seat of our sensibility, the region whither, since sentiment has had any existence, the sons of men carry their hands in any excess of joy or anguish. Do not accuse this chronicle of puerility. The rich, to be sure, never having experienced sufferings of this kind, may think them incredibly petty and small; but the agonies of less fortunate mortals are as well worth our attention as crises and vicissitudes in the lives of the mighty and privileged ones of earth. Is not the pain equally great for either? Suffering exalts all things. And, after all, suppose that we change the terms, and for a suit of clothes, more or less fine, put instead a ribbon, or a star, or a title; have not brilliant careers been tormented by reason of such apparent trifles as these? Add, moreover, that for those people who must seem to have that which they have not, the question of clothes is of enormous importance, and not unfrequently the appearance of possession is the shortest road to possession at a later day.

A cold sweat broke out over Lucien as he bethought him-

self that to-night he must make his first appearance before the Marquise in this dress—the Marquise d'Espard, relative of a first Gentleman of the Bedchamber, a woman whose house was frequented by the most illustrious among illustrious men in every field.

“I look like an apothecary's son, a regular shop-drudge,” he raged inwardly, watching the youth of the Faubourg de Saint-Germain pass under his eyes; graceful, spruce, fashionably dressed, with a certain uniformity of air, a sameness due to a fineness of contour, and a certain dignity of carriage and expression; though, at the same time, each one differed from the rest in the setting by which he had chosen to bring his personal characteristics into prominence. Each one made the most of his personal advantages. Young men in Paris understand the art of presenting themselves quite as well as women. Lucien had inherited from his mother the invaluable physical distinction of race, but the metal was still in the ore, and not set free by the craftsman's hand.

His hair was badly cut. Instead of holding himself upright with an elastic corset, he felt that he was cooped up inside a hideous shirt-collar; he hung his dejected head without resistance on the part of a limp cravat. What woman could guess that a handsome foot was hidden by the clumsy boots which he had brought from Angoulême? What young man could envy him his graceful figure, disguised by the shapeless blue sack which hitherto he had mistakenly believed to be a coat? What bewitching studs he saw on those dazzling white shirt fronts, his own looked dingy by comparison; and how marvelously all these elegant persons were gloved, his own gloves were only fit for a policeman! Yonder was a youth toying with a cane exquisitely mounted; there, another with dainty gold studs in his wristbands. Yet another was twisting a charming riding-whip while he talked with a woman; there were specks of mud on the ample folds of his white trousers, he wore clanking spurs and a tight-fitting jacket, evidently he was about to mount one of the two horses held by a hop-o'-my-thumb of a tiger. A young man who went past drew a watch no thicker than a five-franc piece from his pocket, and looked at it with the air of

a person who is either too early or too late for an appointment.

Lucien, seeing these pretty trifles, hitherto unimagined, became aware of a whole world of indispensable superfluities, and shuddered to think of the enormous capital needed by a professional pretty fellow! The more he admired these gay and careless beings, the more conscious he grew of his own outlandishness; he knew that he looked like a man who has no idea of the direction of the streets, who stands close to the Palais Royal and cannot find it, and asks his way to the Louvre of a passer-by, who tells him, "Here you are." Lucien saw a great gulf fixed between him and this new world, and asked himself how he might cross over, for he meant to be one of these delicate, slim youths of Paris, these young patricians who bowed before women divinely dressed and divinely fair. For one kiss from one of these, Lucien was ready to be cut in pieces, like Count Philip of Königs-mark. Louise's face rose up somewhere in the shadowy background of memory—compared with these queens, she looked like an old woman. He saw women whose names will appear in the history of the nineteenth century, women no less famous than the queens of past times for their wit, their beauty, or their lovers; one who passed was the heroine Mlle. des Touches, so well known as Camille Maupin, the great woman of letters, great by her intellect, great no less by her beauty. He overheard the name pronounced by those who went by.

"Ah!" he thought to himself, "she is Poetry."

What was Mme. de Bargeton in comparison with this angel in all the glory of youth, and hope, and promise of the future, with that sweet smile of hers, and the great dark eyes with all heaven in them, and the glowing light of the sun? She was laughing and chatting with Mme. Firmiani, one of the most charming women in Paris. A voice indeed cried, "Intellect is the lever by which to move the world," but another voice cried no less loudly that money was the fulcrum.

He would not stay any longer on the scene of his collapse and defeat, and went towards the Palais Royal. He did not know the topography of his quarter yet, and was obliged

to ask his way. Then he went to Véry's and ordered dinner by way of an initiation into the pleasures of Paris and a solace for his discouragement. A bottle of Bordeaux, oysters from Ostend, a dish of fish, a partridge, a dish of macaroni and dessert,—this was the *ne plus ultra* of his desire. He enjoyed this little debauch, studying the while how to give the Marquise d'Espard proof of his wit, and redeem the shabbiness of his grotesque accouterments by the display of intellectual riches. The total of the bill drew him down from these dreams, and left him the poorer by fifty of the francs which were to have gone such a long way in Paris. He could have lived in Angoulême for a month on the price of that dinner. Wherefore he closed the door of the palace with awe, thinking as he did so that he should never set foot in it again.

"Eve was right," he said to himself, as he went back under the stone arcading for some more money. "There is a difference between Paris prices and prices in L'Houmeau."

He gazed in at the tailors' windows on the way, and thought of the costumes in the Garden of the Tuileries.

"No," he exclaimed, "I will *not* appear before Mme. d'Espard dressed out as I am."

He fled to his inn, fleet as a stag, rushed up to his room, took out a hundred crowns, and went down again to the Palais Royal, where his future elegance lay scattered over half a score of shops. The first tailor whose door he entered tried as many coats upon him as he would consent to put on, and persuaded his customer that all were in the very latest fashion. Lucien came out the owner of a green coat, a pair of white trousers, and a "fancy waistcoat," for which outfit he gave two hundred francs. Erelong he found a very elegant pair of ready-made shoes that fitted his foot; and finally, when he had made all necessary purchases, he ordered the tradespeople to send them to his address, and inquired for a hairdresser. At seven o'clock that evening he called a cab and drove away to the Opéra, curled like a Saint John of a Procession Day, elegantly waistcoated and gloved, but feeling a little awkward in this kind of sheath in which he found himself for the first time.

In obedience to Mme. de Bargeton's instructions, he asked for the box reserved for the first Gentlemen of the Bedchamber. The man at the box office looked at him, and beholding Lucien in all the grandeur assumed for the occasion, in which he looked like a best man at a wedding, asked Lucien for his order.

"I have no order."

"Then you cannot go in," said the man at the box office dryly.

"But I belong to Mme. d'Espard's party."

"It is not our business to know that," said the man, who could not help exchanging a barely perceptible smile with his colleague.

A carriage stopped under the peristyle as he spoke. A chasseur, in a livery which Lucien did not recognize, let down the step, and two women in evening dress came out of the brougham. Lucien had no mind to lay himself open to an insolent order to get out of the way from the official. He stepped aside to let the two ladies pass.

"Why, that lady is the Marquise d'Espard, whom you say you know, sir," the man said ironically.

Lucien was so much the more confounded because Mme. de Bargeton did not seem to recognize him in his new plumage; but when he stepped up to her, she smiled at him and said—

"This has fallen out wonderfully—come!"

The functionaries at the box office grew serious again as Lucien followed Mme. de Bargeton. On their way up the great staircase the lady introduced M. de Rubempré to her cousin. The box belonging to the first Gentlemen of the Bedchamber is situated in one of the angles at the back of the house, so that its occupants see and are seen all over the theater. Lucien took his seat on a chair behind Mme. de Bargeton, thankful to be in the shadow.

"M. de Rubempré," said the Marquise with flattering graciousness, "this is your first visit to the Opéra, is it not? You must have a view of the house; take this seat, sit in front of the box; we give you permission."

Lucien obeyed as the first act came to an end.



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"You have made good use of your time," Louise said in his ear, in her first surprise at the change in his appearance.

Louise was still the same. The near presence of the Marquise d'Espard, a Parisian Mme. de Bargeton, was so damaging to her; the brilliancy of the Parisienne brought out all the defects in her country cousin so clearly by contrast, that Lucien, looking out over the fashionable audience in the superb building, and then at the great lady, was twice enlightened, and saw poor Anaïs de Nègrepelisse as she really was, as Parisians saw her—a tall, lean, withered woman, with a pimpled face and faded complexion; angular, stiff; affected in her manner; pompous and provincial in her speech; and, above all these things, dowdily dressed. As a matter of fact, the creases in an old dress from Paris still bear witness to good taste, you can tell what the gown was meant for; but an old dress made in the country is inexplicable, it is a thing to provoke laughter. There was neither charm nor freshness about the dress or its wearer; the velvet, like the complexion, had seen wear. Lucien felt ashamed to have fallen in love with this cuttle-fish bone, and vowed that he would profit by Louise's next fit of virtue to leave her for good. Having an excellent view of the house, he could see the opera glasses pointed at the aristocratic box *par excellence*. The best-dressed women must certainly be scrutinizing Mme. de Bargeton, for they smiled as they talked among themselves.

If Mme. d'Espard knew the object of their sarcasms from those feminine smiles and gestures, she was perfectly insensible to them. In the first place, anybody must see that her companion was a poor relation from the country, an affliction with which any Parisian family may be visited. And, in the second, when her cousin had spoken to her of her dress with manifest misgivings, she had reassured Anaïs, seeing that, when once properly dressed, her relative would very easily acquire the tone of Parisian society. If Mme. de Bargeton needed polish, on the other hand she possessed the native haughtiness of good birth, and that indescribable something which may be called "pedigree." So, on Monday her turn would come. And, moreover, the Marquise knew

that as soon as people learned that the stranger was her cousin, they would suspend their banter and look twice before they condemned her.

Lucien did not foresee the change in Louise's appearance shortly to be worked by a scarf about her throat, a pretty dress, an elegant coiffure, and Mme. d'Espard's advice. As they came up the staircase even now, the Marquise told her cousin not to hold her handkerchief unfolded in her hand. Good or bad taste turns upon hundreds of such almost imperceptible shades, which a quick-witted woman discerns at once, while others will never grasp them. Mme. de Bargeton, plentifully apt, was more than clever enough to discover her shortcomings. Mme. d'Espard, sure that her pupil would do her credit, did not decline to form her. In short, the compact between the two women had been confirmed by self-interest on either side.

Mme. de Bargeton, enthralled, dazzled, and fascinated by her cousin's manner, wit, and acquaintances, had suddenly declared herself a votary of the idol of the day. She had discerned the signs of the occult power exerted by the ambitious great lady, and told herself that she could gain her end as the satellite of this star, so she had been outspoken in her admiration. The Marquise was not insensible to the artlessly admitted conquest. She took an interest in her cousin, seeing that she was weak and poor; she was, besides, not indisposed to take a pupil with whom to found a school, and asked nothing better than to have a sort of lady-in-waiting in Mme. de Bargeton, a dependent who would sing her praises, a treasure even more scarce among Parisian women than a stanch and loyal critic among the literary tribe. The flutter of curiosity in the house was too marked to be ignored, however, and Mme. d'Espard politely endeavored to turn her cousin's mind from the truth.

"If anyone comes to our box," she said, "perhaps we may discover the cause to which we owe the honor of the interest that these ladies are taking——"

"I have a strong suspicion that it is my old velvet gown and Angoumois air which Parisian ladies find amusing," Mme. de Bargeton answered, laughing.

"No, it is not you; it is something that I cannot explain," she added, turning to the poet, and, as she looked at him for the first time, it seemed to strike her that he was singularly dressed.

"There is M. du Châtelet," exclaimed Lucien at that very moment, and he pointed a finger towards Mme. de Sérizy's box, which the renovated beau had just entered.

Mme. de Bargeton bit her lips with chagrin as she saw that gesture, and saw besides the Marquise's ill-suppressed smile of contemptuous astonishment. "Where does the young man come from?" her look said, and Louise felt humbled through her love, one of the sharpest of all pangs for a Frenchwoman, a mortification for which she cannot forgive her lover.

In these circles where trifles are of such importance, a gesture or a word at the outset is enough to ruin a newcomer. It is the principal merit of fine manners and the highest breeding that they produce the effect of a harmonious whole, in which every element is so blended that nothing is startling or obtrusive. Even those who break the laws of this science, either through ignorance or carried away by some impulse, must comprehend that it is with social intercourse as with music, a single discordant note is a complete negation of the art itself, for the harmony exists only when all its conditions are observed down to the least particular.

"Who is the gentleman?" asked Mme. d'Espard, looking towards Châtelet. "And have you made Mme. de Sérizy's acquaintance already?"

"Oh! is that the famous Mme. de Sérizy who has had so many adventures and yet goes everywhere?"

"An unheard-of thing, my dear, explicable but unexplained. The most formidable men are her friends, and why? Nobody dares to fathom the mystery. Then is this person the lion of Angoulême?"

"Well, M. le Baron du Châtelet has been a good deal talked about," answered Mme. de Bargeton, moved by vanity to give her adorer the title which she herself had called in question. "He was M. de Montriveau's traveling companion."

"Ah!" said the Marquise d'Espard, "I never hear that name without thinking of the Duchesse de Langeais, poor thing. She vanished like a falling star.—That is M. de Rastignac with Mme. de Nucingen," she continued, indicating another box; "she is the wife of a contractor, a banker, a city man, a broker on a large scale; he forced his way into society with his money, and they say that he is not very scrupulous as to his methods of making it. He is at endless pains to establish his credit as a staunch upholder of the Bourbons, and has tried already to gain admittance into my set. When his wife took Mme. de Langeais's box, she thought that she could take her charm, her wit, and her success as well. It is the old fable of the jay in the peacock's feathers!"

"How do M. and Mme. de Rastignac manage to keep their son in Paris, when, as we know, their income is under a thousand crowns?" asked Lucien, in his astonishment at Rastignac's elegant and expensive dress.

"It is easy to see that you come from Angoulême," said Mme. d'Espard, ironically enough, as she continued to gaze through her opera glass.

Her remark was lost upon Lucien; the all-absorbing spectacle of the boxes prevented him from thinking of anything else. He guessed the comments made upon Mme. de Bargeton, and saw that he himself was an object of no small curiosity. Louise, on the other hand, was exceedingly mortified by the evident slight esteem in which the Marquise held Lucien's beauty.

"He cannot be so handsome as I thought him," she said to herself; and between "not so handsome" and "not so clever as I thought him" there was but one step.

The curtain fell. Châtelet was now paying a visit to the Duchesse de Carigliano in an adjoining box; Mme. de Bargeton acknowledged his bow by a slight inclination of the head. Nothing escapes a woman of the world; Châtelet's air of distinction was not lost upon Mme. d'Espard. Just at that moment four personages, four Parisian celebrities, came into the box, one after another.

The most striking feature of the first comer, M. de Marsay,

famous for the passions which he had inspired, was his girlish beauty; but its softness and effeminacy were counteracted by the expression of his eyes, unflinching, steady, untamed, and hard as a tiger's. He was loved and he was feared. Lucien was no less handsome; but Lucien's expression was so gentle, his blue eyes so limpid, that he scarcely seemed to possess the strength and the power which attract women so strongly. Nothing, moreover, so far had brought out the poet's merits; while de Marsay, with his flow of spirits, his confidence in his power to please, and appropriate style of dress, eclipsed every rival by his presence. Judge, therefore, the kind of figure that Lucien, stiff, starched, unbending in clothes as new and unfamiliar as his surroundings, was likely to cut in de Marsay's vicinity. De Marsay with his wit and charm of manner was privileged to be insolent. From Mme. d'Espard's reception of this personage his importance was at once evident to Mme. de Bargeton.

The second comer was a Vandenesse, the cause of the scandal in which Lady Dudley was concerned. Félix de Vandenesse, amiable, intellectual, and modest, had none of the characteristics on which de Marsay prided himself, and owed his success to diametrically opposed qualities. He had been warmly recommended to Mme. d'Espard by her cousin Mme. de Mortsauf.

The third was General de Montriveau, the author of the Duchesse de Langeais's ruin.

The fourth, M. de Canalis, one of the famous poets of the day, and as yet a newly risen celebrity, was prouder of his birth than of his genius, and dangled in Mme. d'Espard's train by way of concealing his love for the Duchesse de Chaulieu. In spite of his graces and the affectation that spoiled them, it was easy to discern the vast, lurking ambitions that plunged him at a later day into the storms of political life. A face that might be called insignificantly pretty and caressing manners thinly disguised the man's deeply-rooted egoism and habit of continually calculating the chances of a career which at that time looked problematical enough; though his choice of Mme. de Chaulieu (a woman

past forty) made interest for him at Court, and brought him the applause of the Faubourg Saint-Germain and the gibes of the Liberal party, who dubbed him "the poet of the sacristy."

Mme. de Bargeton, with these remarkable figures before her, no longer wondered at the slight esteem in which the Marquise held Lucien's good looks. And when conversation began, when intellects so keen, so subtle, were revealed in two-edged words with more meaning and depth in them than Anaïs de Bargeton heard in a month of talk at Angoulême; and, most of all, when Canalis uttered a sonorous phrase, summing up a materialistic epoch, and gilding it with poetry—then Anaïs felt all the truth of Châtelet's dictum of the previous evening. Lucien was nothing to her now. Everyone cruelly ignored the unlucky stranger; he was so much like a foreigner listening to an unknown language, that the Marquise d'Espard took pity upon him. She turned to Canalis.

"Permit me to introduce M. de Rubempré," she said. "You rank too high in the world of letters not to welcome a *débutant*. M. de Rubempré is from Angoulême, and will need your influence, no doubt, with the powers that bring genius to light. So far, he has no enemies to help him to success by their attacks upon him. Is there enough originality in the idea of obtaining for him by friendship all that hatred has done for you to tempt you to make the experiment?"

The four newcomers all looked at Lucien while the Marquise was speaking. De Marsay, only a couple of paces away, put up an eyeglass and looked from Lucien to Mme. de Bargeton, and then again at Lucien, coupling them with some mocking thought, cruelly mortifying to both. He scrutinized them as if they had been a pair of strange animals, and then he smiled. The smile was like a stab to the distinguished provincial. Félix de Vandenesse assumed a charitable air. Montriveau looked Lucien through and through.

"Madame," M. de Canalis answered with a bow, "I will obey you, in spite of the selfish instinct which prompts us

to show a rival no favor; but you have accustomed us to miracles."

"Very well, do me the pleasure of dining with me on Monday with M. de Rubempré, and you can talk of matters literary at your ease. I will try to enlist some of the tyrants of the world of letters and the great people who protect them, the author of *Ourika*, and one or two young poets with sound views."

"Mme. la Marquise," said de Marsay, "if you give your support to this gentleman for his intellect, I will support him for his good looks. I will give him advice which will put him in a fair way to be the luckiest dandy in Paris. After that, he may be a poet—if he has a mind."

Mme. de Bargeton thanked her cousin by a grateful glance.

"I did not know that you were jealous of intellect," Montriveau said, turning to de Marsay; "good fortune is the death of a poet."

"Is that why your lordship is thinking of marriage?" inquired the dandy, addressing Canalis, and watching Mme. d'Espard to see if the words went home.

Canalis shrugged his shoulders, and Mme. d'Espard, Mme. de Chaulieu's niece, began to laugh. Lucien in his new clothes felt as if he were an Egyptian statue in its narrow sheath; he was ashamed that he had nothing to say for himself all this while. At length he turned to the Marquise.

"After your kindness, madame, I am pledged to make no failures," he said in those soft tones of his.

Châtelet came in as he spoke; he had seen Montriveau, and by hook or crook snatched at the chance of a good introduction to the Marquise d'Espard through one of the kings of Paris. He bowed to Mme. de Bargeton, and begged Mme. d'Espard to pardon him for the liberty he took in invading her box; he had been separated so long from his traveling companion! Montriveau and Châtelet met for the first time since they parted in the desert.

"To part in the desert, and meet again in the opera house!" said Lucien.

"Quite a theatrical meeting!" said Canalis.

Montriveau introduced the Baron du Châtelet to the Marquise, and the Marquise received Her Royal Highness's ex-secretary the more graciously because she had seen that he had been very well received in three boxes already. Mme. de Sérizy knew none but unexceptionable people, and moreover he was Montriveau's traveling companion. So potent was this last credential, that Mme. de Bargeton saw from the manner of the group that they accepted Châtelet as one of themselves without demur. Châtelet's sultan's airs in Angoulême were suddenly explained.

At length the Baron saw Lucien, and favored him with a cool, disparaging little nod, indicative to men of the world of the recipient's inferior station. A sardonic expression accompanied the greeting. "How does *he* come here?" he seemed to say. This was not lost on those who saw it; for de Marsay leaned towards Montriveau, and said in tones audible to Châtelet—

"Do ask him who the queer-looking young fellow is that looks like a dummy at a tailor's shop door."

Châtelet spoke a few words in his traveling companion's ear, and while apparently renewing his acquaintance, no doubt cut his rival to pieces.

If Lucien was surprised at the apt wit and the subtlety with which these gentlemen formulated their replies, he felt bewildered with epigram and repartee, and, most of all, by their offhand way of talking and their ease of manner. The material luxury of Paris had alarmed him that morning; at night he saw the same lavish expenditure of intellect. By what mysterious means, he asked himself, did these people make such piquant reflections on the spur of the moment, those repartees which he could only have made after much pondering. And not only were they at ease in their speech, they were at ease in their dress, nothing looked new, nothing looked old, nothing about them was conspicuous, everything attracted the eyes. The fine gentleman of to-day was the same yesterday, and would be the same to-morrow. Lucien guessed that he himself looked as if he were dressed for the first time in his life.

"My dear fellow," said de Marsay, addressing Félix de



Vandenesse, "that young Rastignac is soaring away like a paper-kite. Look at him in the Marquise de Listomère's box; he is making progress, he is putting up his eyeglass at us! He knows this gentleman, no doubt," added the dandy, speaking to Lucien, and looking elsewhere.

"He can scarcely fail to have heard the name of a great man of whom we are proud," said Mme. de Bargeton. "Quite lately his sister was present when M. de Rubempré read us some very fine poetry."

Félix de Vandenesse and de Marsay took leave of the Marquise d'Espard, and went off to Mme. de Listomère, Vandenesse's sister. The second act began, and the three were left to themselves again. The curious women learned how Mme. de Bargeton came to be there from some of the party, while the others announced the arrival of a poet, and made fun of his costume. Canalis went back to the Duchesse de Chaulieu, and no more was seen of him.

Lucien was glad when the rising of the curtain produced a diversion. All Mme. de Bargeton's misgivings with regard to Lucien were increased by the marked attention which the Marquise d'Espard had shown to Châtelet; her manner towards the Baron was very different from the patronizing affability with which she treated Lucien. Mme. de Listomère's box was full during the second act, and, to all appearance, the talk turned upon Mme. de Bargeton and Lucien. Young Rastignac evidently was entertaining the party; he had raised the laughter that needs fresh fuel every day in Paris, the laughter that seizes upon a topic and exhausts it, and leaves it stale and threadbare in a moment. Mme. d'Espard grew uneasy. She knew that an ill-natured speech is not long in coming to the ears of those whom it will wound, and waited till the end of the act.

After a revulsion of feeling such as had taken place in Mme. de Bargeton and Lucien, strange things come to pass in a brief space of time, and any revolution within us is controlled by laws that work with great swiftness. Châtelet's sage and politic words as to Lucien, spoken on the way home from the Vaudeville, were fresh in Louise's memory. Every phrase was a prophecy, it seemed as if Lucien had set him-

self to fulfill the predictions one by one. When Lucien and Mme. de Bargeton had parted with their illusions concerning each other, the luckless youth, with a destiny not unlike Rousseau's, went so far in his predecessor's footsteps that he was captivated by the great lady and smitten with Mme. d'Espard at first sight. Young men and men who remember their young emotions can see that this was only what might have been looked for. Mme. d'Espard with her dainty ways, her delicate enunciation, and the refined tones of her voice; the fragile woman so envied, of such high place and high degree, appeared before the poet as Mme. de Bargeton had appeared to him in Angoulême. His fickle nature prompted him to desire influence in that lofty sphere at once, and the surest way to secure such influence was to possess the woman who exerted it, and then everything would be his. He had succeeded at Angoulême, why should he not succeed in Paris?

Involuntarily, and despite the novel counter fascination of the stage, his eyes turned to this Célimène in her splendor; he glanced furtively at her every moment; the longer he looked, the more he desired to look at her. Mme. de Bargeton caught the gleam in Lucien's eyes, and saw that he found the Marquise more interesting than the opera. If Lucien had forsaken her for the fifty daughters of Danaus, she could have borne his desertion with equanimity; but another glance—bolder, more ardent, and unmistakable than any before—revealed the state of Lucien's feelings. She grew jealous, but not so much for the future as for the past.

"He never gave me such a look," she thought. "Dear me! Châtelet was right!"

Then she saw that she had made a mistake; and when a woman once begins to repent of her weaknesses, she sponges out the whole past. Every one of Lucien's glances roused her indignation, but to all outward appearance she was calm. De Marsay came back in the interval, bringing M. de Listomère with him; and that serious person and the young coxcomb soon informed the Marquise that the wedding guest in his holiday suit, whom she had the bad luck to have in her box, had as much right to the appellation of Rubempré as a Jew to a baptismal name. Lucien's father was an

apothecary named Chardon. M. de Rastignac, who knew all about Angoulême, had set several boxes laughing already at the mummy whom the Marquise styled her cousin, and at the Marquise's forethought in having an apothecary at hand to sustain an artificial life with drugs. In short, de Marsay brought a selection from the thousand-and-one jokes made by Parisians on the spur of the moment, and no sooner uttered than forgotten. Châtelet was at the back of it all, and the real author of this Punic faith.

Mme. d'Espard turned to Mme. de Bargeton, put up her fan, and said, "My dear, tell me if your protégé's name is really M. de Rubempré?"

"He has assumed his mother's name," said Anaïs, uneasily.

"But who was his father?"

"His father's name was Chardon."

"And what was this Chardon?"

"A druggist."

"My dear friend, I felt quite sure that all Paris could not be laughing at anyone whom I took up. I do not care to stay here when wags come in in high glee because there is an apothecary's son in my box. If you will follow my advice, we will leave it, and at once."

Mme. d'Espard's expression was insolent enough; Lucien was at a loss to account for her change of countenance. He thought that his waistcoat was in bad taste, which was true; and that his coat looked like a caricature of the fashion, which was likewise true. He discerned, in bitterness of soul, that he must put himself in the hands of an expert tailor, and vowed that he would go the very next morning to the most celebrated artist in Paris. On Monday he would hold his own with the men at the Marquise's house.

Yet, lost in thought though he was, he saw the third act to an end, and with his eyes fixed on the gorgeous scene upon the stage, dreamed out his dream of Mme. d'Espard. He was in despair over her sudden coldness; it gave a strange check to the ardent reasoning through which he advanced upon this new love, undismayed by the immense difficulties in the way, difficulties which he saw and resolved to conquer. He roused

himself from these deep musings to look once more at his new idol, turned his head, and saw that he was alone; he had heard a faint rustling sound, the door closed—Mme. d'Espard had taken her cousin with her. Lucien was surprised to the last degree by the sudden desertion; he did not think long about it, however, simply because it was inexplicable.

When the carriage was rolling along the Rue de Richelieu on the way to the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, the Marquise spoke to her cousin in a tone of suppressed irritation.

"My dear child, what are you thinking about? Pray wait till an apothecary's son has made a name for himself before you trouble yourself about him. The Duchesse de Chaulieu does not acknowledge Canalis even now, and he is famous and a man of good family. This young fellow is neither your son nor your lover, I suppose?" added the haughty dame, with a keen, inquisitive glance at her cousin.

"How fortunate for me that I kept the little scapegrace at a distance!" thought Mme. de Bargeton.

"Very well," continued the Marquise, taking the expression in her cousin's eyes for an answer, "drop him, I beg of you. Taking an illustrious name in that way!—Why, it is a piece of impudence that will meet with its deserts in society. It is his mother's name, I dare say; but just remember, dear, that the King alone can confer, by a special ordinance, the title of de Rubempré on the son of a daughter of the house. If she made a *mésalliance*, the favor would be enormous, only to be granted to vast wealth, or conspicuous services, or very powerful influence. The young man looks like a shopman in his Sunday suit; evidently he is neither wealthy nor noble; he has a fine head, but he seems to me to be very silly; he has no idea what to do, and has nothing to say for himself; in fact, he has no breeding. How came you to take him up?"

Mme. de Bargeton renounced Lucien as Lucien himself had renounced her; a ghastly fear lest her cousin should learn the manner of her journey shot through her mind.

"Dear cousin, I am in despair that I have compromised you."

"People do not compromise me," Mme. d'Espard said, smiling; "I am only thinking of you."

"But you have asked him to dine with you on Monday."

"I shall be ill," the Marquise said quickly; "you can tell him so, and I shall leave orders that he is not to be admitted under either name."

During the interval Lucien noticed that everyone was walking up and down in the lobby. He would do the same. In the first place, not one of Mme. d'Espard's visitors recognized him nor paid any attention to him, their conduct seemed nothing less than extraordinary to the provincial poet; and, secondly, Châtelet, on whom he tried to hang, watched him out of the corner of his eye and fought shy of him. Lucien walked to and fro watching the eddying crowd of men, till he felt convinced that his costume was absurd, and he went back to his box, ensconced himself in a corner, and stayed there till the end. At times he thought of nothing but the magnificent spectacle of the ballet in the great Inferno scene in the fifth act; sometimes the sight of the house absorbed him, sometimes his own thoughts; he had seen society in Paris, and the sight had stirred him to the depths.

"So this is my kingdom," he said to himself; "this is the world that I must conquer."

As he walked home through the streets he thought over all that had been said by Mme. d'Espard's courtiers; memory reproducing with strange faithfulness their demeanor, their gestures, their manner of coming and going.

Next day, towards noon, Lucien betook himself to Staub, the great tailor of that day. Partly by dint of entreaties, and partly by virtue of cash, Lucien succeeded in obtaining a promise that his clothes should be ready in time for the great day. Staub went so far as to give his word that a perfectly elegant coat, a waistcoat, and a pair of trousers should be forthcoming. Lucien then ordered linen and pocket-handkerchiefs, a little outfit, in short, of a linen-draper, and a celebrated bootmaker measured him for shoes and boots. He bought a neat walking cane at Verdier's; he went to Mme. Irlande for gloves and shirt studs; in short, he did his

best to reach the climax of dandyism. When he had satisfied all his fancies, he went to the Rue Neuve-de-Luxembourg, and found that Louise had gone out.

"She was dining with Mme. la Marquise d'Espard," her maid said, "and would not be back till late."

Lucien dined for two francs at a restaurant in the Palais Royal, and went to bed early. The next day was Sunday. He went to Louise's lodging at eleven o'clock. Louise had not yet risen. At two o'clock he returned once more.

"Madame cannot see anybody yet," reported Albertine, "but she gave me a line for you."

"Cannot see anybody yet?" repeated Lucien. "But I am not anybody——"

"I do not know," Albertine answered very impertinently; and Lucien, less surprised by Albertine's answer than by a note from Mme. de Bargeton, took the billet, and read the following discouraging lines:

"Mme. d'Espard is not well; she will not be able to see you on Monday. I am not feeling very well myself, but I am about to dress and go to keep her company. I am in despair over this little disappointment; but your talents reassure me, you will make your way without charlatanism."

"And no signature!" Lucien said to himself. He found himself in the Tuileries before he knew whither he was walking.

With the gift of second sight which accompanies genius, he began to suspect that the chilly note was but a warning of the catastrophe to come. Lost in thought, he walked on and on, gazing at the monuments in the Place Louis Quinze.

It was a sunny day; a stream of fine carriages went past him on the way to the Champs Elysées. Following the direction of the crowd of strollers, he saw the three or four thousand carriages that turn the Champs Elysées into an improvised Longchamp on Sunday afternoons in summer. The splendid horses, the toilettes, and liveries bewildered him; he went further and further, until he reached the Arc de Triomphe, then unfinished. What were his feelings when,

as he returned, he saw Mme. de Bargeton and Mme. d'Espard coming towards him in a wonderfully appointed calèche, with a chasseur behind it in waving plumes and that gold-embroidered green uniform which he knew only too well. There was a block somewhere in the row, and the carriages waited. Lucien beheld Louise transformed beyond recognition. All the colors of her toilette had been carefully subordinated to her complexion; her dress was delicious, her hair gracefully and becomingly arranged, her hat, in exquisite taste, was remarkable even beside Mme. d'Espard, that leader of fashion.

There is something in the art of wearing a hat that escapes definition. Tilted too far to the back of the head, it imparts a bold expression to the face; bring it too far forward, it gives you a sinister look; tipped to one side, it has a jaunty air; a well-dressed woman wears her hat exactly as she means to wear it, and exactly at the right angle. Mme. de Bargeton had solved this curious problem at sight. A dainty girdle outlined her slender waist. She had adopted her cousin's gestures and tricks of manner; and now, as she sat by Mme. d'Espard's side, she played with a tiny scent-bottle that dangled by a slender gold chain from one of her fingers, displaying a little well-gloved hand without seeming to do so. She had modeled herself on Mme. d'Espard without mimicking her; the Marquise had found a cousin worthy of her, and seemed to be proud of her pupil.

The men and women on the footways all gazed at the splendid carriage, with the bearings of the d'Espards and Blamont-Chauvrys upon the panels. Lucien was amazed at the number of greetings received by the cousins; he did not know that the "all Paris," which consists in some score of salons, was well aware already of the relationship between the ladies. A little group of young men on horseback accompanied the carriage in the Bois; Lucien could recognize de Marsay and Rastignac among them, and could see from their gestures that the pair of coxcombs were complimenting Mme. de Bargeton upon her transformation. Mme. d'Espard was radiant with health and grace. So her indisposition was simply a pretext for ridding herself of him, for there had been no mention of another day!

The wrathful poet went towards the calèche; he walked slowly, waited till he came in full sight of the two ladies, and made them a bow. Mme. de Bargeton would not see him; but the Marquise put up her eyeglass, and deliberately cut him. He had been disowned by the sovereign lords of Angoulême, but to be disowned by society in Paris was another thing; the booby-squires by doing their utmost to mortify Lucien admitted his power and acknowledged him as a man; for Mme. d'Espard he had positively no existence. This was no sentence, it was a refusal of justice. Poor poet! a deadly cold seized on him when he saw de Marsay eying him through the glass; and when the Parisian lion let that optical instrument fall, it dropped in so singular a fashion that Lucien thought of the knife-blade of the guillotine.

The calèche went by. Rage and a craving for vengeance took possession of his slighted soul. If Mme. de Bargeton had been in his power, he could have cut her throat at that moment; he was a Fouquier-Tinville gloating over the pleasure of sending Mme. d'Espard to the scaffold. If only he could have put de Marsay to the torture with refinements of savage cruelty! Canalis went by on horseback, bowing to the prettiest women, his dress elegant, as became the most dainty of poets.

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed Lucien. "Money, money at all costs! money is the one power before which the world bends the knee." ("No!" cried conscience, "not money, but glory; and glory means work! Work! that was what David said.") "Great Heavens! what am I doing here? But I will triumph. I will drive along this avenue in a calèche with a chasseur behind me! I will possess a Marquise d'Espard." And flinging out the wrathful words, he went to Hurbain's to dine for two francs.

Next morning, at nine o'clock, he went to the Rue Neuve-de-Luxembourg to upbraid Louise for her barbarity. But Mme. de Bargeton was not at home to him, and not only so, but the porter would not allow him to go up to her rooms; so he stayed outside in the street, watching the house till noon. At twelve o'clock Châtelet came out,



looked at Lucien out of the corner of his eye, and avoided him.

Stung to the quick, Lucien hurried after his rival; and Châtelet, finding himself closely pursued, turned and bowed, evidently intending to shake him off by this courtesy.

"Spare me one moment for pity's sake, sir," said Lucien; "I want just a word or two with you. You have shown me friendship, I now ask the most trifling service of that friendship. You have just come from Mme. de Bargeton; how have I fallen into disgrace with her and Mme. d'Espard?—please explain."

"M. Chardon, do you know why the ladies left you at the Opéra that evening?" asked Châtelet, with treacherous good-nature.

"No," said the poor poet.

"Well, it was M. de Rastignac who spoke against you from the beginning. They asked him about you, and the young dandy simply said that your name was Chardon, and not de Rubempré; that your mother was a monthly nurse; that your father, when he was alive, was an apothecary in L'Houmeau, a suburb of Angoulême; and that your sister, a charming girl, gets up shirts to admiration, and is just about to be married to a local printer named Séchard. Such is the world! You no sooner show yourself than it pulls you to pieces.

"M. de Marsay came to Mme. d'Espard to laugh at you with her; so the two ladies, thinking that your presence put them in a false position, went out at once. Do not attempt to go to either house. If Mme. de Bargeton continued to receive your visits, her cousin would have nothing to do with her. You have genius; try to avenge yourself. The world looks down upon you; look down in your turn upon the world. Take refuge in some garret, write your masterpieces, seize on power of any kind, and you will see the world at your feet. Then you can give back the bruises which you have received, and in the very place where they were given. Mme. de Bargeton will be the most distant now because she has been friendly. That is the way with women. But the question now for you is not how to win back Anaïs's

friendship, but how to avoid making an enemy of her. I will tell you of a way. She has written letters to you; send all her letters back to her, she will be sensible that you are acting like a gentleman; and at a later time, if you should need her, she will not be hostile. For my own part, I have so high an opinion of your future, that I have taken your part everywhere; and if I can do anything here for you, you will always find me ready to be of use."

The elderly beau seemed to have grown young again in the atmosphere of Paris. He bowed with frigid politeness; but Lucien, woe-begone, haggard, and undone, forgot to return the salutation. He went back to his inn, and there found the great Staub himself, come in person, not so much to try his customer's clothes as to make inquiries of the landlady with regard to that customer's financial status. The report had been satisfactory. Lucien had traveled post; Mme. de Bargeton brought him back from the Vaudeville last Thursday in her carriage. Staub addressed Lucien as "M. le Comte," and called his customer's attention to the artistic skill with which he had brought a charming figure into relief.

"A young man in such a costume has only to walk in the Tuileries," he said, "and he will marry an English heiress within a fortnight."

Lucien brightened a little under the influences of the German tailor's joke, the perfect fit of his new clothes, the fine cloth, and the sight of a graceful figure which met his eyes in the looking-glass. Vaguely he told himself that Paris was the capital of chance, and for the moment he believed in chance. Had he not a volume of poems and a magnificent romance entitled *The Archer of Charles IX.* in manuscript? He had hope for the future. Staub promised the overcoat and the rest of the clothes the next day.

The next day the bootmaker, linen-draper, and tailor all returned armed each with his bill, which Lucien, still under the charm of provincial habits, paid forthwith, not knowing how otherwise to rid himself of them. After he had paid, there remained but three hundred and sixty francs out of the two thousand which he had brought with him from Angou-

lême, and he had been but one week in Paris! Nevertheless, he dressed and went out to take a stroll on the Terrasse des Feuillants. He had his day of triumph. He looked so handsome and so graceful, he was so well dressed, that women looked at him; two or three were so much struck with his beauty, that they turned their heads to look again. Lucien studied the gait and carriage of the young men on the Terrasse, and took a lesson in fine manners while he meditated on his three hundred and sixty francs.

That evening, alone in his chamber, an idea occurred to him which threw a light on the problem of his existence at the Gaillard-Bois, where he lived on the plainest fare, thinking to economize in this way. He asked for his account, as if he meant to leave, and discovered that he was indebted to his landlord to the extent of a hundred francs. The next morning was spent in running about the Latin Quarter, recommended for its cheapness by David. For a long while he looked about till, finally, in the Rue de Cluny, close to the Sorbonne, he discovered a place where he could have a furnished room for such a price as he could afford to pay. He settled with his hostess of the Gaillard-Bois, and took up his quarters in the Rue de Cluny that same day. His removal only cost him the cab fare.

When he had taken possession of his poor room, he made a packet of Mme. de Bargeton's letters, laid them on the table, and sat down to write to her; but before he wrote he fell to thinking over that fatal week. He did not tell himself that he had been the first to be faithless; that for a sudden fancy he had been ready to leave his Louise without knowing what would become of her in Paris. He saw none of his own shortcomings, but he saw his present position, and blamed Mme. de Bargeton for it. She was to have lighted his way; instead she had ruined him. He grew indignant, he grew proud, he worked himself into a paroxysm of rage, and set himself to compose the following epistle:

"What would you think, madame, of a woman who should take a fancy to some poor and timid child full of the noble superstitions which the grown man calls 'illusions'; and

using all the charm of woman's coquetry, all her most delicate ingenuity, should feign a mother's love to lead that child astray? Her fondest promises, the card-castles which raised his wonder, cost her nothing; she leads him on, tightens her hold upon him, sometimes coaxing, sometimes scolding him for his want of confidence, till the child leaves his home and follows her blindly to the shores of a vast sea. Smiling, she lures him into a frail skiff, and sends him forth alone and helpless to face the storm. Standing safe on the rock, she laughs and wishes him luck. You are that woman; I am that child.

"The child has a keepsake in his hands, something which might betray the wrongs done by your beneficence, your kindness in deserting him. You might have to blush if you saw him struggling for life, and chanced to recollect that once you clasped him to your breast. When you read these words the keepsake will be in your own safe keeping; you are free to forget everything.

"Once you pointed out fair hopes to me in the skies, I awake to find reality in the squalid poverty of Paris. While you pass, and others bow before you, on your brilliant path in the great world, I, whom you deserted on the threshold, shall be shivering in the wretched garret to which you consigned me. Yet some pang may perhaps trouble your mind amid festivals and pleasures; you may think sometimes of the child whom you thrust into the depths. If so, madame, think of him without remorse. Out of the depths of his misery the child offers you the one thing left to him—his forgiveness in a last look. Yes, madame, thanks to you, I have nothing left. Nothing! was not the world created from nothing? Genius should follow the Divine example; I begin with God-like forgiveness, but as yet I know not whether I possess the God-like power. You need only tremble lest I should go astray; for you would be answerable for my sins. Alas! I pity you, for you will have no part in the future towards which I go, with work as my guide."

After penning this rhetorical effusion, full of the somber dignity which an artist of one-and-twenty is rather apt to

overdo, Lucien's thoughts went back to them at home. He saw the pretty rooms which David had furnished for him, at the cost of part of his little store, and a vision rose before him of quiet, simple pleasures in the past. Shadowy figures came about him; he saw his mother and Eve and David, and heard their sobs over his leave-taking, and at that he began to cry himself, for he felt very lonely in Paris, and friendless and forlorn.

Two or three days later he wrote to his sister :

“MY DEAR EVE,—When a sister shares the life of a brother who devotes himself to art, it is her sad privilege to take more sorrow than joy into her life; and I am beginning to fear that I shall be a great trouble to you. Have I not abused your goodness already? have not all of you sacrificed yourselves to me? It is the memory of the past, so full of family happiness, that helps me to bear up in my present loneliness. Now that I have tasted the first beginnings of poverty and the treachery of the world of Paris, how my thoughts have flown to you, swift as an eagle back to his eyrie, so that I might be with true affection again. Did you see sparks in the candle? Did a coal pop out of the fire? Did you hear singing in your ears? And did mother say, ‘Lucien is thinking of us,’ and David answer, ‘He is fighting his way in the world’?”

“My Eve, I am writing this letter for your eyes only. I cannot tell anyone else all that has happened to me, good and bad, blushing for both, as I write, for good here is as rare as evil ought to be. You shall have a great piece of news in a very few words. Mme. de Bargeton was ashamed of me, disowned me, would not see me, and gave me up nine days after we came to Paris. She saw me in the street and looked another way; when, simply to follow her into the society to which she meant to introduce me, I had spent seventeen hundred and sixty francs out of the two thousand I had brought from Angoulême, the money so hardly scraped together. ‘How did you spend it?’ you will ask. Paris is a strange bottomless gulf, my poor sister; you can dine here for less than a franc, yet the simplest dinner at a

fashionable restaurant costs fifty francs; there are waistcoats and trousers to be had for four francs and two francs each; but a fashionable tailor never charges less than a hundred francs. You pay for everything; you pay a halfpenny to cross the kennel in the street when it rains; you cannot go the least little way in a cab for less than thirty-two sous.

"I have been staying in one of the best parts of Paris, but now I am living at the Hôtel de Cluny, in the Rue de Cluny, one of the poorest and darkest slums, shut in between three churches and the old buildings of the Sorbonne. I have a furnished room on the fourth floor; it is very bare and very dirty, but, all the same, I pay fifteen francs a month for it. For breakfast I spend a penny on a roll and a halfpenny for milk, but I dine very decently for twenty-two sous at a restaurant kept by a man named Flicoteaux in the Place de la Sorbonne itself. My expenses every month will not exceed sixty francs, everything included, until the winter begins—at least I hope not. So my two hundred and forty francs ought to last me for the first four months. Between now and then I shall have sold *The Archer of Charles IX.* and the *Marguerites* no doubt. Do not be in the least uneasy on my account. If the present is cold and bare and poverty-stricken, the blue distant future is rich and splendid; most great men have known the vicissitudes which depress but cannot overwhelm me.

"Plautus, the great comic Latin poet, was once a miller's lad. Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* at night, and by day was a common working man like anyone else; and more than all, the great Cervantes, who lost an arm at the battle of Lepanto, and helped to win that famous day, was called a 'base-born, handless dotard' by the scribblers of his day; there was an interval of ten years between the appearance of the first part and the second part of his sublime *Don Quixote* for lack of a publisher. Things are not so bad as that nowadays. Mortifications and want only fall to the lot of unknown writers; as soon as a man's name is known, he grows rich, and I will be rich. And besides, I live within myself, I spend half the day at the Bibliothèque Saint-

Geneviève, learning all that I want to learn; I should not go far unless I knew more than I do. So at this moment I am almost happy. In a few days I have fallen in with my life very gladly. I begin the work that I love with daylight, my subsistence is secure, I think a great deal, and I study. I do not see that I am open to attack at any point, now that I have renounced a world where my vanity might suffer at any moment. The great men of every age are obliged to lead lives apart. What are they but birds in the forest? They sing, nature falls under the spell of their song, and no one should see them. That shall be my lot, always supposing that I can carry out my ambitious plans.

“Mme. de Bargeton I do not regret. A woman who could behave as she behaved does not deserve a thought. Nor am I sorry that I left Angoulême. She did wisely when she flung me into the sea of Paris to sink or swim. This is the place for men of letters and thinkers and poets; here you cultivate glory, and I know how fair the harvest is that we reap in these days. Nowhere else can a writer find the living works of the great dead, the works of art which quicken the imagination in the galleries and museums here; nowhere else will you find great reference libraries always open in which the intellect may find pasture. And lastly, here in Paris there is a spirit which you breathe in the air; it infuses the least details, every literary creation bears traces of its influence. You learn more by talk in a café, or at a theater, in one half hour, than you would learn in ten years in the provinces. Here, in truth, wherever you go, there is always something to see, something to learn, some comparison to make. Extreme cheapness and excessive dear-ness—there is Paris for you; there is honeycomb here for every bee, every nature finds its own nourishment. So, though life is hard for me just now, I repent of nothing. On the contrary, a fair future spreads out before me, and my heart rejoices though it is saddened for the moment. Good-by, my dear sister. Do not expect letters from me regularly; it is one of the peculiarities of Paris that one really does not know how the time goes. Life is so alarmingly

rapid. I kiss the mother and you and David more tenderly than ever."

The name of Flicoteaux is engraved on many memories. Few indeed were the students who lived in the Latin Quarter during the last twelve years of the Restoration and did not frequent that temple sacred to hunger and impecuniosity. There a dinner of three courses, with a quarter bottle of wine or a bottle of beer, could be had for eighteen sous; or for twenty-two sous the quarter bottle became a bottle. Flicoteaux, that friend of youth, would beyond a doubt have amassed a colossal fortune but for a line on his bill of fare, a line which rival establishments are wont to print in capital letters, thus—BREAD AT DISCRETION, which, being interpreted, should read "indiscretion."

Flicoteaux has been nursing-father to many an illustrious name. Verily, the heart of more than one great man ought to wax warm with innumerable recollections of inexpressible enjoyment at the sight of the small, square window panes that look upon the Place de la Sorbonne and the Rue Neuve-de-Richelieu. Flicoteaux II. and Flicoteaux III. respected the old exterior, maintaining the dingy hue and general air of a respectable, old-established house, showing thereby the depth of their contempt for the charlatanism of the shop-front, the kind of advertisement which feasts the eyes at the expense of the stomach, to which your modern restaurant almost always has recourse. Here you beheld no piles of straw-stuffed game never destined to make the acquaintance of the spit, no fantastical fish to justify the mountebank's remark, "I saw a fine carp to-day; I expect to buy it this day week." Instead of the prime vegetables more fittingly described by the word primeval, artfully displayed in the window for the delectation of the military man and his fellow country-woman the nursemaid, honest Flicoteaux exhibited full salad-bowls adorned with many a rivet, or pyramids of stewed prunes to rejoice the sight of the customer, and assure him that the word "dessert," with which other hand-bills made too free, was in this case no charter to hoodwink the public. Loaves of six pounds' weight, cut in four quar-



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ters, made good the promise of "bread at discretion." Such was the plenty of the establishment, that Molière would have celebrated it if it had been in existence in his day, so comically appropriate is the name.

Flicoteaux still subsists; so long as students are minded to live, Flicoteaux will make a living. You feed there, neither more nor less; and you feed as you work, with morose or cheerful industry, according to the circumstances and the temperament.

At that time his well-known establishment consisted of two dining-halls, at right angles to each other; long, narrow, low-ceiled rooms, looking respectively on the Rue Neuve-de-Richelieu and the Place de la Sorbonne. The furniture must have come originally from the refectory of some abbey, for there was a monastic look about the lengthy tables, where the serviettes of regular customers, each thrust through a numbered ring of crystallized tin plate, were laid by their places. Flicoteaux I. only changed the serviettes of a Sunday; but Flicoteaux II. changed them twice a week, it is said, under pressure of competition which threatened his dynasty.

Flicoteaux's restaurant is no banqueting-hall, with its refinements and luxuries; it is a workshop where suitable tools are provided, and everybody gets up and goes as soon as he has finished. The coming and going within is swift. There is no dawdling among the waiters; they are all busy; every one of them is wanted.

The fare is not very varied. The potato is a permanent institution; there might be not a single tuber left in Ireland, and prevailing dearth elsewhere, but you would still find potatoes at Flicoteaux's. Not once in thirty years shall you miss its pale gold (the color beloved of Titian), sprinkled with chopped verdure; the potato enjoys a privilege that women might envy; such as you see it in 1814, so shall you find it in 1840. Mutton cutlets and fillet of beef at Flicoteaux's represent black game and fillet of sturgeon at Véry's; they are not on the regular bill of fare, that is, and must be ordered beforehand. Beef of the feminine gender there prevails; the young of the bovine species appears in all kinds

of ingenious disguises. When the whiting and mackerel abound on our shores, they are likewise seen in large numbers at Flicoteaux's; his whole establishment, indeed, is directly affected by the caprices of the season and the vicissitudes of French agriculture. By eating your dinners at Flicoteaux's you learn a host of things of which the wealthy, the idle, and folk indifferent to the phases of Nature have no suspicion, and the student penned up in the Latin Quarter is kept accurately informed of the state of the weather and good or bad seasons. He knows when it is a good year for peas or French beans, and the kind of salad stuff that is plentiful; when the Great Market is glutted with cabbages, he is at once aware of the fact, and the failure of the beet-root crop is brought home to his mind. A slander, old in circulation in Lucien's time, connected the appearance of beefsteaks with a mortality among horseflesh.

Few Parisian restaurants are so well worth seeing. Everyone at Flicoteaux's is young; you see nothing but youth; and although earnest faces and grave, gloomy, anxious faces are not lacking, you see hope and confidence and poverty gayly endured. Dress, as a rule, is careless, and regular comers in decent clothes are marked exceptions. Everybody knows at once that something extraordinary is afoot; a mistress to visit, a theater party, or some excursion into higher spheres. Here, it is said, friendships have been made among students who became famous men in after days, as will be seen in the course of this narrative; but with the exception of a few knots of young fellows from the same part of France who make a group about the end of a table, the gravity of the diners is hardly relaxed. Perhaps this gravity is due to the catholicity of the wine, which checks good fellowship of any kind.

Flicoteaux's frequenters may recollect certain somber and mysterious figures enveloped in the gloom of the chilliest penury; these beings would dine there daily for a couple of years and then vanish, and the most inquisitive regular comer could throw no light on the disappearance of such goblins of Paris. Friendships struck up over Flicoteaux's dinners were sealed in neighboring cafés in the flames of heady punch,

or by the generous warmth of a small cup of black coffee glorified by a dash of something hotter and stronger.

Lucien, like all neophytes, was modest and regular in his habits in those early days at the Hôtel de Cluny. After the first unlucky venture in fashionable life which absorbed his capital, he threw himself into his work with the first earnest enthusiasm, which is frittered away so soon over the difficulties or in the by-paths of every life in Paris. The most luxurious and the very poorest lives are equally beset with temptations which nothing but the fierce energy of genius or the morose persistence of ambition can overcome.

Lucien used to drop in at Flicoteaux's about half-past four, having remarked the advantages of an early arrival; the bill-of-fare was more varied, and there was still some chance of obtaining the dish of your choice. Like all imaginative persons, he had taken a fancy to a particular seat, and showed discrimination in his selection. On the very first day he had noticed a table near the counter, and from the faces of those who sat about it, and chance snatches of their talk, he recognized brothers of the craft. A sort of instinct, moreover, pointed out the table near the counter as a spot whence he could parley with the owners of the restaurant. In time an acquaintance would grow up, he thought, and then in the day of distress he could no doubt obtain the necessary credit. So he took his place at a small square table close to the desk, intended probably for casual comers, for the two clean serviettes were unadorned with rings. Lucien's opposite neighbor was a thin, pallid youth, to all appearance as poor as he himself; his handsome face was somewhat worn, already it told of hopes that had vanished, leaving lines upon his forehead and barren furrows in his soul, where seeds had been sown that had come to nothing. Lucien felt drawn to the stranger by these tokens; his sympathies went out to him with irresistible fervor.

After a week's exchange of small courtesies and remarks, the poet from Angoulême found the first person with whom he could chat. The stranger's name was Étienne Lousteau. Two years ago he had left his native place, a town in Berri, just as Lucien had come from Angoulême. His lively ges-

tures, bright eyes, and occasionally curt speech revealed a bitter apprenticeship to literature. Étienne had come from Sancerre with his tragedy in his pocket, drawn to Paris by the same motives that impelled Lucien—hope of fame and power and money.

Sometimes Étienne Lousteau came for several days together; but in a little while his visits became few and far between, and he would stay away for five or six days in succession. Then he would come back, and Lucien would hope to see his poet next day, only to find a stranger in his place. When two young men meet daily, their talk harks back to their last conversation; but these continual interruptions obliged Lucien to break the ice afresh each time, and further checked an intimacy which made little progress during the first few weeks. On inquiry of the damsel at the counter, Lucien was told that his future friend was on the staff of a small newspaper, and wrote reviews of books and dramatic criticism of pieces played at the Ambigu-Comique, the Gaité, and the Panorama-Dramatique. The young man became a personage all at once in Lucien's eyes. Now, he thought, he would lead the conversation on rather more personal topics, and make some effort to gain a friend so likely to be useful to a beginner. The journalist stayed away for a fortnight. Lucien did not know that Étienne only dined at Flicoteaux's when he was hard up, and hence his gloomy air of disenchantment and the chilly manner, which Lucien met with gracious smiles and amiable remarks. But, after all, the project of a friendship called for mature deliberation. This obscure journalist appeared to lead an expensive life in which *petits verres*, cups of coffee, punch-bowls, sight-seeing, and suppers played a part. In the early days of Lucien's life in the Latin Quarter, he behaved like a poor child bewildered by his first experience of Paris life; so that when he had made a study of prices and weighed his purse, he lacked courage to make advances to Étienne; he was afraid of beginning a fresh series of the blunders of which he was still repenting. And he was still under the yoke of provincial creeds; his two guardian angels, Eve and David, rose up before him at the least approach of an evil thought,

putting him in mind of all the hopes that were centered on him, of the happiness that he owed to the old mother, of all the promises of his genius.

He spent his mornings in studying history at the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève. His very first researches made him aware of frightful errors in the memoirs of *The Archer of Charles IX.* When the library closed, he went back to his damp, chilly room to correct his work, cutting out whole chapters and piecing it together anew. And after dining at Flicoteaux's, he went down to the Passage du Commerce to see the newspapers at Blossé's reading-room, as well as new books and magazines and poetry, so as to keep himself informed of the movements of the day. And when, towards midnight, he returned to his wretched lodgings, he had used neither fuel nor candle-light. His reading in those days made such an enormous change in his ideas, that he revised his volume of flower-sonnets, his beloved *Marguerites*, working them over to such purpose, that scarce a hundred lines of the original verses were allowed to stand.

So in the beginning Lucien led the honest, innocent life of the country lad who never leaves the Latin Quarter; devoting himself wholly to his work, with thoughts of the future always before him; who finds Flicouteaux's ordinary luxurious after the simple home-fare; and strolls for recreation along the alleys of the Luxembourg, the blood surging back to his heart as he gives timid side glances to the pretty women. But this could not last. Lucien, with his poetic temperament and boundless longings, could not withstand the temptations held out by the play-bills.

The Théâtre-Français, the Vaudeville, the Variétés, the Opéra-Comique relieved him of some sixty francs, although he always went to the pit. What student could deny himself the pleasure of seeing Talma in one of his famous rôles? Lucien was fascinated by the theater, that first love of all poetic temperaments; the actors and actresses were awe-inspiring creatures; he did not so much as dream of the possibility of crossing the footlights and meeting them on familiar terms. The men and women who gave him so much pleasure were surely marvelous beings, whom the newspapers treated

with as much gravity as matters of national interest. To be a dramatic author, to have a play produced on the stage! What a dream was this to cherish! A dream which a few bold spirits like Casimir Delavigne had actually realized! Thick swarming thoughts like these, and moments of belief in himself, followed by despair, gave Lucien no rest, and kept him in the narrow way of toil and frugality, in spite of the smothered grumblings of more than one frenzied desire.

Carrying prudence to an extreme, he made it a rule never to enter the precincts of the Palais Royal, that place of perdition where he had spent fifty francs at Véry's in a single day, and nearly five hundred francs on his clothes; and when he yielded to temptation, and saw Fleury, Talma, the two Baptistes, or Michot, he went no further than the murky passage where theatre-goers used to stand in a string from half-past five in the afternoon till the hour when the doors opened, and belated comers were compelled to pay ten sous for a place near the ticket-office. And after waiting for two hours, the cry of "All tickets are sold!" rang not unfrequently in the ears of disappointed students. When the play was over, Lucien went home with downcast eyes, through streets lined with living attractions, and perhaps fell in with one of those commonplace adventures which loom so large in a young and timorous imagination.

One day Lucien counted over his remaining stock of money, and took alarm at the melting of his funds; a cold perspiration broke out upon him when he thought that the time had come when he must find a publisher, and try also to find work for which a publisher would pay him. The young journalist, with whom he had made a one-sided friendship, never came now to Flicoteaux's. Lucien was waiting for a chance—which failed to present itself. In Paris there are no chances except for men with a very wide circle of acquaintance; chances of success of every kind increase with the number of your connections; and, therefore, in this sense also the chances are in favor of the big battalions. Lucien had sufficient provincial foresight still left, and had no mind

to wait until only a last few coins remained to him. He resolved to face the publishers.

So one tolerably chilly September morning Lucien went down the Rue de la Harpe, with his two manuscripts under his arm. As he made his way to the Quai des Augustins, and went along, looking into the booksellers' windows on one side and into the Seine on the other, his good genius might have counseled him to pitch himself into the water sooner than plunge into literature. After heart-searching hesitations, after a profound scrutiny of the various countenances, more or less encouraging, soft-hearted, churlish, cheerful, or melancholy, to be seen through the window panes, or in the doorways of the booksellers' establishments, he espied a house where the shopmen were busy packing books at a great rate. Goods were being dispatched. The walls were plastered with bills:

#### JUST OUT

LE SOLITAIRE, by M. le Vicomte d'Arincourt.  
Third edition.

LÉONIDE, by Victor Ducange; five volumes  
12mo, printed on fine paper. 12 francs.

INDUCTIONS MORALES, by Kératry.

"They are lucky, that they are!" exclaimed Lucien.

The placard, a new and original idea of the celebrated *Ladvoat*, was just beginning to blossom out upon the walls. In no long space Paris was to wear motley, thanks to the exertions of his imitators, and the Treasury was to discover a new source of revenue.

Anxiety sent the blood surging to Lucien's heart, as he who had been so great at Angoulême, so insignificant of late in Paris, slipped past the other houses, summoned up all his courage, and at last entered the shop thronged with assistants, customers, and booksellers—"And authors too, perhaps!" thought Lucien.

"I want to speak with M. Vidal or M. Porchon," he said, addressing a shopman. He had read the names on the signboard—VIDAL & PORCHON (it ran), *French and foreign booksellers' agents*.

"Both gentlemen are engaged," said the man.

"I will wait."

Left to himself, the poet scrutinized the packages, and amused himself for a couple of hours by scanning the titles of books, looking into them, and reading a page or two here and there. At last, as he stood leaning against a window, he heard voices, and suspecting that the green curtains hid either Vidal or Porchon, he listened to the conversation.

"Will you take five hundred copies of me? If you will, I will let you have them at five francs, and give fourteen to the dozen."

"What does that bring them in at?"

"Sixteen sous less."

"Four francs four sous?" said Vidal or Porchon, whichever it was.

"Yes," said the vendor.

"Credit your account?" inquired the purchaser.

"Old humbug! you would settle with me in eighteen months' time, with bills at a twelvemonth."

"No. Settled at once," returned Vidal or Porchon.

"Bills at nine months?" asked the publisher or author, who evidently was selling his book.

"No, my dear fellow, twelve months," returned one of the firm of booksellers' agents.

There was a pause.

"You are simply cutting my throat!" said the visitor.

"But in a year's time shall we have placed a hundred copies of *Léonide*?" said the other voice. "If books went off as fast as the publishers would like, we should be millionaires, my good sir; but they don't, they do as the public pleases. There is someone now bringing out an edition of Scott's novels at eighteen sous per volume, three livres twelve sous per copy, and you want me to give you more for your stale remainders? No. If you mean to push this novel of yours, you must make it worth my while.—Vidal!"

A stout man, with a pen behind his ear, came down from his desk.

"How many copies of Ducange did you place last journey?" asked Porchon of his partner.



"Two hundred of *Le Petit Vieillard de Calais*; but to sell them I was obliged to cry down two books which pay in less commission, and uncommonly fine 'nightingales' they are now."

(A "nightingale," as Lucien afterwards learned, is a bookseller's name for books that linger on hand, perched out of sight in the loneliest nooks in the shop.)

"And besides," added Vidal, "Picard is bringing out some novels, as you know. We have been promised twenty per cent. on the published price to make the thing a success."

"Very well, at twelve months," the publisher answered in a piteous voice, thunderstruck by Vidal's confidential remark.

"Is it an offer?" Porchon inquired curtly.

"Yes." The stranger went out. After he had gone, Lucien heard Porchon say to Vidal—

"We have three hundred copies on order now. We will keep him waiting for his settlement, sell the *Léonides* for five francs net, settlement in six months, and——"

"And that will be fifteen hundred francs into our pockets," said Vidal.

"Oh, I saw quite well that he was in a fix. He is giving Ducange four thousand francs for two thousand copies."

Lucien cut Vidal short by appearing in the entrance of the den.

"I have the honor of wishing you a good-day, gentlemen," he said, addressing both partners. The booksellers nodded slightly.

"I have a French historical romance after the style of Scott. It is called *The Archer of Charles IX.*; I propose to offer it to you——"

Porchon glanced at Lucien with lusterless eyes, and laid his pen down on the desk. Vidal stared rudely at the author.

"We are not publishing booksellers, sir; we are booksellers' agents," he said. "When we bring out a book ourselves, we only deal in well-known names; and we only take serious literature besides—history and epitomes."

"But my book is very serious. It is an attempt to set the struggle between Catholics and Calvinists in its true light;

the Catholics were supporters of absolute monarchy, and the Protestants for a republic."

"M. Vidal!" shouted an assistant. Vidal fled.

"I don't say, sir, that your book is not a masterpiece," replied Porchon, with scanty civility, "but we only deal in books that are ready printed. Go and see somebody that buys manuscripts. There is old Doguereau in the Rue du Coq, near the Louvre, he is in the romance line. If you had only spoken sooner, you might have seen Pollet, a competitor of Doguereau and of the publishers in the Wooden Galleries."

"I have a volume of poetry——"

"M. Porchon!" somebody shouted.

"*Poetry!*" Porchon exclaimed angrily. "For what do you take me?" he added, laughing in Lucien's face. And he dived into the regions of the back shop.

Lucien went back across the Pont Neuf absorbed in reflection. From all that he understood of this mercantile dialect, it appeared that books, like cotton nightcaps, were to be regarded as articles of merchandise to be sold dear and bought cheap.

"I have made a mistake," said Lucien to himself; but, all the same, this rough-and-ready practical aspect of literature made an impression upon him.

In the Rue du Coq he stopped in front of a modest-looking shop, which he had passed before. He saw the inscription DOGUEREAU, BOOKSELLER, painted above it in yellow letters on a green ground, and remembered that he had seen the name at the foot of the title-page of several novels at Blossé's reading-room. In he went, not without the inward trepidation which a man of any imagination feels at the prospect of a battle. Inside the shop he discovered an odd-looking old man, one of the queer characters of the trade in the days of the Empire.

Doguereau wore a black coat with vast square skirts, when fashion required swallow-tail coats. His waistcoat was of some cheap material, a checked pattern of many colors; a steel chain, with a copper key attached to it, hung from his fob and dangled down over a roomy pair of black nether garments. The bookseller's watch must have been the size

of an onion. Iron-gray ribbed stockings, and shoes with silver buckles completed his costume. The old man's head was bare, and ornamented with a fringe of grizzled locks, quite poetically scanty. "Old Doguereau," as Porchon styled him, was dressed half like a professor of belles-lettres as to his trousers and shoes, half like a tradesman with respect to the variegated waistcoat, the stockings, and the watch; and the same odd mixture appeared in the man himself. He united the magisterial, dogmatic air, and the hollow countenance of the professor of rhetoric with the sharp eyes, suspicious mouth, and vague uneasiness of the bookseller.

"M. Doguereau?" asked Lucien.

"That is my name, sir."

"I am the author of a romance," began Lucien.

"You are very young," remarked the bookseller.

"My age, sir, has nothing to do with the matter."

"True," and the old bookseller took up the manuscript.

"Ah, begad! *The Archer of Charles IX.*, a good title. Let us see now, young man, just tell me your subject in a word or two."

"It is a historical work, sir, in the style of Scott. The character of the struggle between the Protestants and Catholics is depicted as a struggle between two opposed systems of government, in which the throne is seriously endangered. I have taken the Catholic side."

"Eh! but you have ideas, young man. Very well, I will read your book, I promise you. I would rather have had something more in Mrs. Radcliffe's style; but if you are industrious, if you have some notion of style, conceptions, ideas, and the art of telling a story, I don't ask better than to be of use to you. What do we want but good manuscripts?"

"When can I come back?"

"I am going into the country this evening; I shall be back again the day after to-morrow. I shall have read your manuscript by that time; and if it suits me, we might come to terms that very day."

Seeing his acquaintance so easy, Lucien was inspired with the unlucky idea of bringing the *Marguerites* upon the scene.

"I have a volume of poetry as well, sir——" he began.

"Oh! you are a poet! Then I don't want your romance," and the old man handed back the manuscript. "The rhyming fellows come to grief when they try their hands at prose. In prose you can't use words that mean nothing; you absolutely must say something."

"But Sir Walter Scott, sir, wrote poetry as well as——"

"That is true," said Doguereau, relenting. He guessed that the young fellow before him was poor, and kept the manuscript. "Where do you live? I will come and see you."

Lucien, all unsuspecting of the idea at the back of the old man's head, gave his address; he did not see that he had to do with a bookseller of the old school, a survival of the eighteenth century, when booksellers tried to keep Voltaires and Montesquieus starving in garrets under lock and key.

"The Latin Quarter. I am coming back that very way," said Doguereau, when he had read the address.

"Good man!" thought Lucien, as he took his leave. "So I have met a friend to young authors, a man of taste who knows something. That is the kind of man for me! It is just as I said to David—talent soon makes its way in Paris."

Lucien went home again happy and light of heart; he dreamed of glory. He gave not another thought to the ominous words which fell on his ear as he stood by the counter in Vidal and Porchon's shop; he beheld himself the richer by twelve hundred francs at least. Twelve hundred francs! It meant a year in Paris, a whole year of preparation for the work that he meant to do. What plans he built on that hope! What sweet dreams, what visions of a life established on a basis of work! Mentally he found new quarters, and settled himself in them; it would not have taken much to set him making a purchase or two. He could only stave off impatience by constant reading at Blosse's.

Two days later old Doguereau came to the lodgings of his budding Sir Walter Scott. He was struck with the pains which Lucien had taken with the style of this his first work, delighted with the strong contrasts of character sanctioned

by the epoch, and surprised at the spirited imagination which a young writer always displays in the scheming of a first plot—he had not been spoiled, had not old Daddy Doguereau. He had made up his mind to give a thousand francs for *The Archer of Charles IX.*; he would buy the copyright out and out, and bind Lucien by an engagement for several books. But when he came to look at the house, the old fox thought better of it.

“A young fellow that lives here has none but simple tastes,” said he to himself; “he is fond of study, fond of work; I need not give more than eight hundred francs.”

“Fourth floor,” answered the landlady, when he asked for M. Lucien de Rubempré. The old bookseller, peering up, saw nothing but the sky above the fourth floor.

“This young fellow,” thought he, “is a good-looking lad; one might go so far as to say that he is very handsome. If he were to make too much money, he would only fall into dissipated ways, and then he would not work. In the interests of us both, I shall only offer six hundred francs, in coin though, not paper.”

He climbed the stairs and gave three taps at the door. Lucien came to open it. The room was forlorn in its bareness. A bowl of milk and a penny roll stood on the table. The destitution of genius made an impression on Daddy Doguereau.

“Let him preserve these simple habits of life, this frugality, these modest requirements,” thought he.—Aloud he said: “It is a pleasure to me to see you. Thus, sir, lived Jean-Jacques, whom you resemble in more ways than one. Amid such surroundings the fire of genius shines brightly; good work is done in such rooms as these. This is how men of letters should work, instead of living riotously in cafés and restaurants, wasting their time and talent and our money.”

He sat down.

“Your romance is not bad, young man. I was a professor of rhetoric once; I know French history, there are some capital things in it. You have a future before you, in fact.”

“Oh! sir.”

"No; I tell you so. We may do business together. I will buy your romance."

Lucien's heart swelled and throbbed with gladness. He was about to enter the world of literature; he should see himself in print at last.

"I will give you four hundred francs," continued Doguereau in honeyed accents, and he looked at Lucien with an air which seemed to betoken an effort of generosity.

"The volume?" queried Lucien.

"For the romance," said Doguereau, heedless of Lucien's surprise. "In ready money," he added; "and you shall undertake to write two books for me every year for six years. If the first book is out of print in six months, I will give you six hundred francs for the others. So, if you write two books each year, you will be making a hundred francs a month; you will have a sure income; you will be well off. There are some authors whom I only pay three hundred francs for a romance; I give two hundred for translations of English books. Such prices would have been exorbitant in the old days."

"Sir, we cannot possibly come to an understanding. Give me back my manuscript, I beg," said Lucien, in a cold chill.

"Here it is," said the old bookseller. "You know nothing of business, sir. Before an author's first book can appear, a publisher is bound to sink sixteen hundred francs on the paper and the printing of it. It is easier to write a romance than to find all that money. I have a hundred romances in manuscript, and I have not a hundred and sixty thousand francs in my cash box, alas! I have not made so much in all these twenty years that I have been a bookseller. So you don't make a fortune by printing romances, you see. Vidal and Porchon only take them of us on conditions that grow harder and harder day by day. You have only your time to lose, while I am obliged to disburse two thousand francs. If we fail, *habent sua fata libelli*, I lose two thousand francs; while, as for you, you simply hurl an ode at the thick-headed public. When you have thought over this that I have the honor of telling you, you will come back to me.—*You will come back to me!*" he asserted authorita-

tively, by way of reply to a scornful gesture made involuntarily by Lucien. "So far from finding a publisher obliging enough to risk two thousand francs for an unknown writer, you will not find a publisher's clerk that will trouble himself to look through your screed. Now that I have read it, I can point out a good many slips in grammar. You have put *observer* for *faire observer* and *malgré que*. *Malgré* is a preposition, and requires an object."

Lucien appeared to be humiliated.

"When I see you again, you will have lost a hundred francs," he added. "I shall only give a hundred crowns."

With that he rose and took his leave. On the threshold he said, "If you had not something in you, and a future before you; if I did not take an interest in studious youth, I should not have made you such a handsome offer. A hundred francs per month! Think of it! After all, a romance in a drawer is not eating its head off like a horse in a stable, nor will it find you in victuals either, and that's a fact."

Lucien snatched up his manuscript and dashed it on the floor.

"I would rather burn it, sir!" he exclaimed.

"You have a poet's head," returned his senior.

Lucien devoured his bread and supped his bowl of milk, then he went downstairs. His room was not large enough for him; he was turning round and round in it like a lion in a cage at the Jardin des Plantes.

At the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, whither Lucien was going, he had come to know a stranger by sight; a young man of five-and-twenty or thereabouts, working with the sustained industry which nothing can disturb nor distract, the sign by which your genuine literary worker is known. Evidently the young man had been reading there for some time, for the librarian and attendants all knew him and paid him special attention; the librarian would even allow him to take away books, with which Lucien saw him return in the morning. In the stranger student he recognized a brother in penury and hope.

Pale-faced and slight and thin, with a fine forehead hidden

by masses of black, tolerably unkempt hair, there was something about him that attracted indifferent eyes: it was a vague resemblance which he bore to portraits of the young Bonaparte, engraved from Robert Lefebvre's picture. That engraving is a poem of melancholy intensity, of suppressed ambition, of power working below the surface. Study the face carefully, and you will discover genius in it and discretion, and all the subtlety and greatness of the man. The portrait has speaking eyes like a woman's; they look out, greedy of space, craving difficulties to vanquish. Even if the name of Bonaparte were not written beneath it, you would gaze long at that face.

Lucien's young student, the incarnation of this picture, usually wore footed trousers, shoes with thick soles to them, an overcoat of coarse cloth, a black cravat, a waistcoat of some gray-and-white material buttoned to the chin, and a cheap hat. Contempt for superfluity in dress was visible in his whole person. Lucien also discovered that the mysterious stranger with that unmistakable stamp which genius sets upon the forehead of its slaves was one of Flicoteaux's most regular customers; he ate to live, careless of the fare which appeared to be familiar to him, and drank water. Wherever Lucien saw him, at the library or at Flicoteaux's, there was a dignity in his manner, springing doubtless from the consciousness of a purpose that filled his life, a dignity which made him unapproachable. He had the expression of a thinker, meditation dwelt on the fine nobly carved brow. You could tell from the dark bright eyes, so clear-sighted and quick to observe, that their owner was wont to probe to the bottom of things. He gesticulated very little, his demeanor was grave. Lucien felt an involuntary respect for him.

Many times already the pair had looked at each other at the Bibliothèque or at Flicoteaux's; many times they had been on the point of speaking, but neither of them had ventured so far as yet. The silent young man went off to the further end of the library, on the side at right angles to the Place de la Sorbonne, and Lucien had no opportunity of making his acquaintance, although he felt drawn to a



worker whom he knew by indescribable tokens for a character of no common order. Both, as they came to know afterwards, were unsophisticated and shy, given to fears which cause a pleasurable emotion to solitary creatures. Perhaps they never would have been brought into communication if they had not come across each other that day of Lucien's disaster; for as Lucien turned into the Rue des Grès, he saw the student coming away from the Bibliothèque Sainte-Genève.

"The library is closed; I don't know why, monsieur," said he.

Tears were standing in Lucien's eyes; he expressed his thanks by one of those gestures that speak more eloquently than words, and unlock hearts at once when two men meet in youth. They went together along the Rue des Grès towards the Rue de la Harpe.

"As that is so, I shall go to the Luxembourg for a walk," said Lucien. "When you have come out, it is not easy to settle down to work again."

"No; one's ideas will not flow in the proper current," remarked the stranger. "Something seems to have annoyed you, monsieur?"

"I have just had a queer adventure," said Lucien, and he told the history of his visit to the Quai, and gave an account of his subsequent dealings with the old bookseller. He gave his name and said a word or two of his position. In one month or thereabouts he had spent sixty francs on his board, thirty for lodging, twenty more francs in going to the theater, and ten at Blossé's reading-room—one hundred and twenty francs in all, and now he had just a hundred and twenty francs in hand.

"Your story is mine, monsieur, and the story of ten or twelve hundred young fellows besides who come from the country to Paris every year. There are others even worse off than we are. Do you see that theater?" he continued, indicating the turrets of the Odéon. "There came one day to lodge in one of the houses in the square a man of talent who had fallen into the lowest depths of poverty. He was married, in addition to the misfortunes which we share with

him, to a wife whom he loved; and the poorer or the richer, as you will, by two children. He was burdened with debt, but he put his faith in his pen. He took a comedy in five acts to the Odéon; the comedy was accepted, the management arranged to bring it out, the actors learned their parts, the stage manager urged on the rehearsals. Five several bits of luck; five dramas to be performed in real life, and far harder tasks than the writing of a five-act play. The poor author lodged in a garret; you can see the place from here. He drained his last resources to live until the first representation; his wife pawned her clothes, they all lived on dry bread. On the day of the final rehearsal, the household owed fifty francs in the Quarter to the baker, the milkwoman, and the porter. The author had only the strictly necessary clothes—a coat, a shirt, trousers, a waistcoat, and a pair of boots. He felt sure of success; he kissed his wife. The end of their troubles was at hand. ‘At last! There is nothing against us now,’ cried he.—‘Yes, there is fire,’ said his wife; ‘look, the Odéon is on fire!’—The Odéon was on fire, monsieur. So do not you complain. You have clothes, you have neither wife nor child, you have a hundred and twenty francs for emergencies in your pocket, and you owe no one a penny.—Well, the piece went through a hundred and fifty representations at the Théâtre Louvois. The King allowed the author a pension. ‘Genius is patience,’ as Buffon said. And patience after all is man’s nearest approach to Nature’s processes of creation. What is Art, monsieur, but Nature concentrated?”

By this time the young men were striding along the walks of the Luxembourg, and in no long time Lucien learned the name of the stranger who was doing his best to administer comfort. That name has since grown famous. Daniel d’Arthez is one of the most illustrious of living men of letters; one of the rare few who show us an example of “a noble gift with a noble nature combined,” to quote a poet’s fine thought.

“There is no cheap route to greatness,” Daniel went on in his kind voice. “The works of Genius are watered with tears. The gift that is in you, like an existence in the

physical world, passes through childhood and its maladies. Nature sweeps away sickly or deformed creatures, and Society rejects an imperfectly developed talent. Any man who means to rise above the rest must make ready for a struggle and be undaunted by difficulties. A great writer is a martyr who does not die; that is all.—There is the stamp of genius on your forehead,” d’Arthez continued, enveloping Lucien by a glance; “but unless you have within you the will of genius, unless you are gifted with angelic patience, unless, no matter how far the freaks of Fate have set you from your destined goal, you can find the way to your Infinite as the turtles in the Indies find their way to the ocean, you had better give up at once.”

“Then do you yourself expect these ordeals?” asked Lucien.

“Trials of every kind, slander and treachery, and effrontery and cunning, the rivals who act unfairly, and the keen competition of the literary market,” his companion said resignedly. “What is a first loss, if only your work was good?”

“Will you look at mine and give me your opinion?” asked Lucien.

“So be it,” said d’Arthez. “I am living in the Rue des Quatre-Vents. Desplein, one of the most illustrious men of genius in our time, the greatest surgeon that the world has known, once endured the martyrdom of early struggles with the first difficulties of a glorious career in the same house. I think of that every night, and the thought gives me the stock of courage that I need every morning. I am living in the very room where, like Rousseau, he often ate bread and cherries, but, unlike Rousseau, he had no Theresa. Come in an hour’s time. I shall be in.”

The poets grasped each other’s hands with a rush of melancholy and tender feeling inexpressible in words, and went their separate ways; Lucien to fetch his manuscript, Daniel d’Arthez to pawn his watch and buy a couple of fagots. The weather was cold, and his new-found friend should find a fire in his room.

Lucien was punctual. He noticed at once that the house

was of an even poorer class than the Hôtel de Cluny. A staircase gradually became visible at the further end of a dark passage; he mounted to the fifth floor, and found d'Arthez's room.

A bookcase of dark-stained wood, with rows of labeled cardboard cases on the shelves, stood between the two crazy windows. A gaunt, painted wooden bedstead, of the kind seen in school dormitories, a night-table, picked up cheaply somewhere, and a couple of horsehair armchairs, filled the further end of the room. The wallpaper, a Highland plaid pattern, was glazed over with the grime of years. Between the window and the grate stood a long table littered with papers, and opposite the fireplace there was a cheap mahogany chest of drawers. A second-hand carpet covered the floor—a necessary luxury, for it saved firing. A common office armchair, cushioned with leather, crimson once, but now hoary with wear, was drawn up to the table. Add half-a-dozen rickety chairs, and you have a complete list of the furniture. Lucien noticed an old-fashioned candle-sconce for a card-table, with an adjustable screen attached, and wondered to see four wax candles in the sockets. D'Arthez explained that he could not endure the smell of tallow, a little trait denoting great delicacy of sense-perception, and the exquisite sensibility which accompanies it.

The reading lasted for seven hours. Daniel listened conscientiously, forbearing to interrupt by word or comment—one of the rarest proofs of good taste in a listener.

"Well?" queried Lucien, laying the manuscript on the chimney-piece.

"You have made a good start on the right way," d'Arthez answered judicially, "but you must go over your work again. You must strike out a different style for yourself if you do not mean to ape Sir Walter Scott, for you have taken him for your model. You begin, for instance, as he begins, with long conversations to introduce your characters, and only when they have said their say do description and action follow.

"This opposition, necessary in all work of a dramatic kind, comes last. Just put the terms of the problem the

other way round. Give descriptions, to which our language lends itself so admirably, instead of diffuse dialogue, magnificent in Scott's work, but colorless in your own. Lead naturally up to your dialogue. Plunge straight into the action. Treat your subject from different points of view, sometimes in a sidelight, sometimes retrospectively; vary your methods, in fact, to diversify your work. You may be original while adapting the Scotch novelist's form of dramatic dialogue to French history. There is no passion in Scott's novels; he ignores passion, or perhaps it was interdicted by the hypocritical manners of his country. Woman for him is duty incarnate. His heroines, with possibly one or two exceptions, are all exactly alike; he has drawn them all from the same model, as painters say. They are, every one of them, descended from Clarissa Harlowe. And returning continually, as he did, to the same idea of woman, how could he do otherwise than produce a single type, varied only by degrees of vividness in the coloring? Woman brings confusion into Society through passion. Passion gives infinite possibilities. Therefore depict passion; you have one great resource open to you, forgone by the great genius for the sake of providing family reading for prudish England. In France you have the charming sinner, the brightly-colored life of Catholicism, contrasted with somber Calvinistic figures on a background of the times when passions ran higher than at any other period of our history.

"Every epoch which has left authentic records since the time of Charles the Great calls for at least one romance. Some require four or five; the periods of Louis XIV., of Henry IV., of Francis I., for instance. You would give us in this way a picturesque history of France, with the costumes and furniture, the houses and their interiors, and domestic life, giving us the spirit of the time instead of a laborious narration of ascertained facts. Then there is further scope for originality. You can remove some of the popular delusions which disfigure the memories of most of our kings. Be bold enough in this first work of yours to rehabilitate the great magnificent figure of Catherine, whom you have sacrificed to the prejudices which still cloud her

name. And finally, paint Charles IX. for us as he really was, and not as Protestant writers have made him. Ten years of persistent work, and fame and fortune will be yours."

By this time it was nine o'clock; Lucien followed the example set in secret by his future friend by asking him to dine at Edon's and spent twelve francs at that restaurant. During the dinner Daniel admitted Lucien into the secret of his hopes and studies. Daniel d'Arthez would not allow that any writer could attain to a pre-eminent rank without a profound knowledge of metaphysics. He was engaged in ransacking the spoils of ancient and modern philosophy, and in the assimilation of it all; he would be like Molière, a profound philosopher first, and a writer of comedies afterwards. He was studying the world of books and the living world about him—thought and fact. His friends were learned naturalists, young doctors of medicine, political writers, and artists, a number of earnest students full of promise.

D'Arthez earned a living by conscientious and ill-paid work; he wrote articles for encyclopædias, dictionaries of biography and natural science, doing just enough to enable him to live while he followed his own bent, and neither more nor less. He had a piece of imaginative work on hand, undertaken solely for the sake of studying the resources of language, an important psychological study in the form of a novel, unfinished as yet, for d'Arthez took it up or laid it down as the humor took him, and kept it for days of great distress. D'Arthez's revelations of himself were made very simply, but to Lucien he seemed like an intellectual giant; and by eleven o'clock, when they left the restaurant, he began to feel a sudden, warm friendship for this nature, unconscious of its loftiness, this unostentatious worth.

Lucien took d'Arthez's advice unquestioningly, and followed it out to the letter. The most magnificent palaces of fancy had been suddenly flung open to him by a nobly-gifted mind, matured already by thought and critical examinations undertaken for their own sake, not for publication, but for the solitary thinker's own satisfaction. The burning coal had been laid on the lips of the poet of Angou-

lème, a word uttered by a hard student in Paris had fallen upon ground prepared to receive it in the provincial. Lucien set about recasting his work.

In his gladness at finding in this wilderness of Paris a nature abounding in generous and sympathetic feeling, the distinguished provincial did as all young creatures hungering for affection are wont to do; he fastened, like a chronic disease, upon this one friend that he had found. He called for d'Arthez on his way to the Bibliothèque, walked with him on fine days in the Luxembourg Gardens, and went with his friend every evening as far as the door of his lodging-house after sitting next him at Flicoteaux's. He pressed close to his friend's side as a soldier might keep by a comrade on the frozen Russian plains.

During those early days of his acquaintance, he noticed, not without chagrin, that his presence imposed a certain restraint on the circle of Daniel's intimates. The talk of those superior beings of whom d'Arthez spoke to him with such concentrated enthusiasm kept within the bounds of a reserve but little in keeping with the evident warmth of their friendships. At these times Lucien discreetly took his leave, a feeling of curiosity mingling with the sense of something like pain at the ostracism to which he was subjected by these strangers, who all addressed each other by their Christian names. Each one of them, like d'Arthez, bore the stamp of genius upon his forehead.

After some private opposition, overcome by d'Arthez without Lucien's knowledge, the newcomer was at length judged worthy to make one of the *cénacle* of lofty thinkers. Henceforward he was to be one of a little group of young men who met almost every evening in d'Arthez's room, united by the keenest sympathies and by the earnestness of their intellectual life. They all foresaw a great writer in d'Arthez; they looked upon him as their chief since the loss of one of their number, a mystical genius, one of the most extraordinary intellects of the age. This former leader had gone back to his province for reasons on which it serves no purpose to enter, but Lucien often heard them speak of this absent friend as "Louis." Several of the group were destined to

fall by the way; but others, like d'Arthez, have since won all the fame that was their due. A few details as to the circle will readily explain Lucien's strong feeling of interest and curiosity.

One among those who still survive was Horace Bianchon, then a house-student at the Hôtel-Dieu; later, a shining light at the École de Paris, and now so well known that it is needless to give any description of his appearance, genius, or character.

Next came Léon Giraud, that profound philosopher and bold theorist, turning all systems inside out, criticising, expressing, and formulating, dragging them all to the feet of his idol—Humanity; great even in his errors, for his honesty ennobled his mistakes. An intrepid toiler, a conscientious scholar, he became the acknowledged head of a school of moralists and politicians. Time alone can pronounce upon the merits of his theories; but if his convictions have drawn him into paths in which none of his old comrades tread, none the less he is still their faithful friend.

Art was represented by Joseph Bridau, one of the best painters among the younger men. But for a too impressionable nature, which made havoc of Joseph's heart, he might have continued the tradition of the great Italian masters, though, for that matter, the last word has not yet been said concerning him. He combines Roman outline with Venetian color; but love is fatal to his work, love not merely transfixes his heart, but sends its arrow through the brain, deranges the course of his life, and sets the victim describing the strangest zigzags. If the mistress of the moment is too kind or too cruel, Joseph will send in to the Exhibition sketches where the drawing is clogged with color, or pictures finished under the stress of some imaginary woe, in which he gave his whole attention to the drawing, and left the color to take care of itself. He is a constant disappointment to his friends and the public; yet Hoffman would have worshiped him for his daring experiments in the realms of art, for his caprices, for a certain fantastic streak in his work. When Bridau is wholly himself he is admirable, and as praise is sweet to him, his disgust is great when no one praises the



failures in which he alone discovers all that is lacking in the eyes of the public. He is whimsical to the last degree. His friends have seen him destroy a finished picture because, in his eyes, it looked too smooth. "It is overdone," he would say; "it is niggling work."

With his eccentric, yet lofty nature, with a nervous organization and all that it entails of torment and delight, the craving for perfection becomes morbid. Intellectually he is akin to Sterne, though he is not a literary worker. There is an indescribable piquancy about his epigrams and sallies of thought. He is eloquent, he knows how to love, but the uncertainty that appears in his execution is a part of the very nature of the man. The brotherhood loved him for the very qualities which the philistine would style defects.

Last among the living comes Fulgence Ridal. No writer of our times possesses more of the exuberant spirit of pure comedy than this poet, careless of fame, who will fling his more commonplace productions to theatrical managers, and keep the most charming scenes in the seraglio of his brain for himself and his friends. Of the public he asks just sufficient to secure his independence, and then declines to do anything more. Indolent and prolific as Rossini, compelled, like great poet-comedians, like Molière and Rabelais, to see both sides of everything, and all that is to be said both for and against, he is a skeptic, ready to laugh at all things. Fulgence Ridal is a great practical philosopher. His worldly wisdom, his genius for observation, his contempt for fame ("fuss," as he calls it) have not seared a kind heart. He is as energetic on behalf of another as he is careless where his own interests are concerned; and if he bestirs himself, it is for a friend. Living up to his Rabelaisian mask, he is no enemy to good cheer, though he never goes out of his way to find it; he is melancholy and gay. His friends dubbed him the "Dog of the Regiment." You could have no better portrait of the man than his nickname.

Three more of the band, at least as remarkable as the friends who have just been sketched in outline, were destined to fall by the way. Of these, Meyraux was the first. Meyraux died after stirring up the famous controversy be-

tween Cuvier and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, a great question which divided the whole scientific world into two opposite camps, with these two men of equal genius as leaders. This befell some months before the death of the champion of rigorous analytical science as opposed to the pantheism of one who is still living to bear an honored name in Germany. Meyraux was the friend of that "Louis" of whom death was so soon to rob the intellectual world.

With these two, both marked by death, and unknown to-day in spite of their wide knowledge and their genius, stands a third, Michel Chrestien, the great Republican thinker, who dreamed of European Federation, and had no small share in bringing about the Saint-Simonian movement in 1830. A politician of the caliber of Saint-Just and Danton, but simple, meek as a maid, and brimful of illusions and loving-kindness; the owner of a singing voice which would have sent Mozart, or Weber, or Rossini into ecstasies, for his singing of certain songs of Béranger's could intoxicate the heart in you with poetry, or hope, or love—Michel Chrestien, poor as Lucien, poor as Daniel d'Arthez, as all the rest of his friends, gained a living with the haphazard indifference of a Diogenes. He indexed lengthy works, he drew up prospectuses for book-sellers, and kept his doctrines to himself, as the grave keeps the secrets of the dead. Yet the gay bohemian of intellectual life, the great statesman who might have changed the face of the world, fell as a private soldier in the cloister of Saint-Merri; some shopkeeper's bullet struck down one of the noblest creatures that ever trod French soil, and Michel Chrestien died for other doctrines than his own. His Federation scheme was more dangerous to the aristocracy of Europe than the Republican propaganda; it was more feasible and less extravagant than the hideous doctrines of indefinite liberty proclaimed by the young madcaps who assume the character of heirs of the Convention. All who knew the noble plebeian wept for him; there is not one of them but remembers, and often remembers, a great obscure politician.

Esteem and friendship kept the peace between the extremes of hostile opinion and conviction represented in the brotherhood. Daniel d'Arthez came of a good family in Picardy.

His belief in the Monarchy was quite as strong as Michel Chrestien's faith in European Federation. Fulgence Ridal scoffed at Léon Giraud's philosophical doctrines, while Giraud himself prophesied for d'Arthez's benefit the approaching end of Christianity and the extinction of the institution of the family. Michel Chrestien, a believer in the religion of Christ, the divine lawgiver, who taught the equality of men, would defend the immortality of the soul from Bianchon's scalpel, for Horace Bianchon was before all things an analyst.

There was plenty of discussion, but no bickering. Vanity was not engaged, for the speakers were also the audience. They would talk over their work among themselves and take counsel of each other with the delightful openness of youth. If the matter in hand was serious, the opponent would leave his own position to enter into his friend's point of view; and being an impartial judge in a matter outside his own sphere, would prove the better helper; envy, the hideous treasure of disappointment, abortive talent, failure, and mortified vanity, was quite unknown among them. All of them, moreover, were going their separate ways. For these reasons, Lucien and others admitted to their society felt at their ease in it. Wherever you find real talent, you will find frank good fellowship and sincerity, and no sort of pretension, the wit that caresses the intellect and never is aimed at self-love.

When the first nervousness, caused by respect, wore off, it was unspeakably pleasant to make one of this elect company of youth. Familiarity did not exclude in each a consciousness of his own value, nor a profound esteem for his neighbor; and, finally, as every member of the circle felt that he could afford to receive or to give, no one made a difficulty of accepting. Talk was unflagging, full of charm, and ranging over the most varied topics; words light as arrows sped to the mark. There was a strange contrast between the dire material poverty in which the young men lived and the splendor of their intellectual wealth. They looked upon the practical problems of existence simply as matter for friendly jokes. The cold weather happened to set in early that year. Five of d'Arthez's friends appeared one day,

each concealing firewood under his cloak; the same idea had occurred to the five, as it sometimes happens that all the guests at a picnic are inspired with the notion of bringing a pie as their contribution.

All of them were gifted with the moral beauty which reacts upon the physical form, and, no less than work and vigils, overlays a youthful face with a shade of divine gold; purity of life and the fire of thought had brought refinement and regularity into features somewhat pinched and rugged. The poet's amplitude of brow was a striking characteristic common to them all; the bright, sparkling eyes told of cleanliness of life. The hardships of penury, when they were felt at all, were borne so gayly and embraced with such enthusiasm, that they had left no trace to mar the serenity peculiar to the faces of the young who have no grave errors laid to their charge as yet, who have not stooped to any of the base compromises wrung from impatience of poverty by the strong desire to succeed. The temptation to use any means to this end is the greater since that men of letters are lenient with bad faith and extend an easy indulgence to treachery.

There is an element in friendship which doubles its charm and renders it indissoluble—a sense of certainty which is lacking in love. These young men were sure of themselves and of each other; the enemy of one was the enemy of all; the most urgent personal considerations would have been shattered if they had clashed with the sacred solidarity of their fellowship. All alike incapable of disloyalty, they could oppose a formidable No to any accusation brought against the absent and defend them with perfect confidence. With a like nobility of nature and strength of feeling, it was possible to think and speak freely on all matters of intellectual or scientific interest; hence the honesty of their friendships, the gayety of their talk, and with this intellectual freedom of the community there was no fear of being misunderstood; they stood upon no ceremony with each other; they shared their troubles and joys, and gave thought and sympathy from full hearts. The charming delicacy of feeling which makes the tale of *Deux Amis* a treasury for great souls, was

the rule of their daily life. It may be imagined, therefore, that their standard of requirements was not an easy one; they were too conscious of their worth, too well aware of their happiness, to care to trouble their life with the admixture of a new and unknown element.

This federation of interests and affection lasted for twenty years without a collision or disappointment. Death alone could thin the numbers of the noble Pleiades, taking first Louis Lambert, later Meyraux and Michel Chrestien.

When Michel Chrestien fell in 1832 his friends went, in spite of the perils of the step, to find his body at Saint-Merri; and Horace Bianchon, Daniel d'Arthez, Léon Giraud, Joseph Bridau, and Fulgence Ridal performed the last duties to the dead, between two political fires. By night they buried their beloved in the cemetery of Père-Lachaise; Horace Bianchon, undaunted by the difficulties, cleared them away one after another—it was he indeed who besought the authorities for permission to bury the fallen insurgent and confessed to his old friendship with the dead Federalist. The little group of friends present at the funeral with those five great men will never forget that touching scene.

As you walk in the trim cemetery you will see a grave purchased in perpetuity, a grass-covered mound with a dark wooden cross above it, and the name in large red letters—MICHEL CHRESTIEN. There is no other monument like it. The friends thought to pay a tribute to the sternly simple nature of the man by the simplicity of the record of his death.

So, in that chilly garret, the fairest dreams of friendship were realized. These men were brothers leading lives of intellectual effort, loyally helping each other, making no reservations, not even of their worst thoughts; men of vast acquirements, natures tried in the crucible of poverty. Once admitted as an equal among such elect souls, Lucien represented beauty and poetry. They admired the sonnets which he read to them; they would ask him for a sonnet as he would ask Michel Chrestien for a song. And, in the desert of Paris, Lucien found an oasis in the Rue des Quatre-Vents.

At the beginning of October, Lucien had spent the last

of his money on a little firewood; he was half-way through the task of recasting his work, the most strenuous of all toil, and he was penniless. As for Daniel d'Arthez, burning blocks of spent tan, and facing poverty like a hero, not a word of complaint came from him; he was as sober as any elderly spinster, and methodical as a miser. This courage called out Lucien's courage; he had only newly come into the circle, and shrank with invincible repugnance from speaking of his straits. One morning he went out, manuscript in hand, and reached the Rue du Coq; he would sell *The Archer of Charles IX.* to Doguereau; but Doguereau was out. Lucien little knew how indulgent great natures can be to the weaknesses of others. Every one of the friends had thought of the peculiar troubles besetting the poetic temperament, of the prostration which follows upon the struggle, when the soul has been overwrought by the contemplation of that nature which it is the task of art to reproduce. And strong as they were to endure their own ills, they felt keenly for Lucien's distress; they guessed that his stock of money was failing; and after all the pleasant evenings spent in friendly talk and deep meditations, after the poetry, the confidences, the bold flights over the fields of thought or into the far future of the nations, yet another trait was to prove how little Lucien had understood these new friends of his.

"Lucien, dear fellow," said Daniel, "you did not dine at Flicoteaux's yesterday, and we know why."

Lucien could not keep back the overflowing tears.

"You showed a want of confidence in us," said Michel Chrestien; "we shall chalk that up over the chimney, and when we have scored ten we will——"

"We have all of us found a bit of extra work," said Bianchon; "for my own part, I have been looking after a rich patient for Desplein; d'Arthez has written an article for the *Revue Encyclopédique*; Chrestien thought of going out to sing in the Champs-Élysées of an evening with a pocket-handkerchief and four candles, but he found a pamphlet to write instead for a man who has a mind to go into politics, and gave his employer six hundred francs' worth of

Machiavelli; Léon Giraud borrowed fifty francs of his publisher; Joseph sold one or two sketches; and Fulgence's piece was given on Sunday, and there was a full house."

"Here are two hundred francs," said Daniel, "and let us say no more about it."

"Why, if he is not going to hug us all as if we had done something extraordinary!" cried Chrestien.

Lucien, meanwhile, had written to the home circle. His letter was a masterpiece of sensibility and good will, as well as a sharp cry wrung from him by distress. The answers which he received the next day will give some idea of the delight that Lucien took in this living encyclopedia of angelic spirits, each one of whom bore the stamp of the art or science which he followed:

*David Séchard to Lucien.*

"MY DEAR LUCIEN,—Inclosed herewith is a bill at ninety days, payable to your order, for two hundred francs. You can draw on M. Métivier, paper merchant, our Paris correspondent in the Rue Serpente. My good Lucien, we have absolutely nothing. Eve has undertaken the charge of the printing-house, and works at her task with such devotion, patience, and industry, that I bless Heaven for giving me such an angel for a wife. She herself says that it is impossible to send you the least help. But I think, my friend, now that you are started in so promising a way, with such great and noble hearts for your companions, that you can hardly fail to reach the greatness to which you were born, aided as you are by intelligence almost divine in Daniel d'Arthez and Michel Chrestien and Léon Giraud, and counseled by Meyraux and Bianchon and Ridal, whom we have come to know through your dear letter. So I have drawn this bill without Eve's knowledge, and I will contrive somehow to meet it when the time comes. Keep on your way, Lucien; it is rough, but it will be glorious. I can bear anything but the thought of you sinking into the sloughs of Paris, of which I saw so much. Have sufficient strength of mind to do as you are doing, and keep out of scrapes and

bad company, wild young fellows and men of letters of a certain stamp, whom I learned to take at their just valuation when I lived in Paris. Be a worthy compeer of the divine spirits whom we have learned to love, through you. Your life will soon meet with its reward. Farewell, dearest brother; you have sent transports of joy to my heart. I did not expect such courage of you.

“DAVID.”

*Eve Séchard to Lucien.*

“DEAR,—Your letter made all of us cry. As for the noble hearts to whom your good angel surely led you, tell them that a mother and a poor young wife will pray for them night and morning; and if the most fervent prayers can reach the Throne of God, surely they will bring blessings upon you all. Their names are engraved upon my heart. Ah! some day I shall see your friends; I will go to Paris, if I have to walk the whole way, to thank them for their friendship for you, for to me the thought has been like balm to smarting wounds. We are working like day-laborers here, dear. This husband of mine, the unknown great man whom I love more and more every day, as I discover moment by moment the wealth of his nature, leaves the printing-house more and more to me. Why, I guess. Our poverty, yours, and ours, and our mother’s, is heartbreaking to him. Our adored David is a Prometheus gnawed by a vulture, a haggard, sharp-beaked regret. As for himself, noble fellow, he scarcely thinks of himself; he is hoping to make a fortune for *us*. He spends his whole time in experiments in paper-making; he begged me to take his place and look after the business, and gives me as much help as his preoccupation allows. Alas! I shall be a mother soon. That should have been a crowning joy; but as things are, it saddens me. Poor mother! she has grown young again; she has found strength to go back to her tiring nursing. We should be happy if it were not for these money cares. Old Father Séchard will not give his son a farthing. David went over to see if he could borrow a little for you, for we were in despair



over your letter. 'I know Lucien,' David said; 'he will lose his head and do something rash.'—I gave him a good scolding. 'My brother disappoint us in any way!' I told him, 'Lucien knows that I should die of sorrow.'—Mother and I have pawned a few things; David does not know about it, mother will redeem them as soon as she has made a little money. In this way we have managed to put together a hundred francs, which I am sending you by the coach. If I did not answer your last letter, do not remember it against me, dear; we were working all night just then. I have been working like a man. Oh, I had no idea that I was so strong!

"Mme. de Bargeton is a heartless woman; she has no soul; even if she cared for you no longer, she owed it to herself to use her influence for you and to help you when she had torn you from us to plunge you into that dreadful sea of Paris. Only by the special blessing of Heaven could you have met with true friends there among those crowds of men and innumerable interests. She is not worth a regret. I used to wish that there might be some devoted woman always with you, a second myself; but now I know that your friends will take my place, and I am happy. Spread your wings, my dear great genius, you will be our pride as well as our beloved.  
EVE."

"My darling," the mother wrote, "I can only add my blessing to all that your sister says, and assure you that you are more in my thoughts and in my prayers (alas!) than those whom I see daily; for some hearts, the absent are always in the right, and so it is with the heart of your mother."

So two days after the loan was offered so graciously, Lucien repaid it. Perhaps life had never seemed so bright to him as at that moment; but the touch of self-love in his joy did not escape the delicate sensibility and searching eyes of his friends.

"Anyone might think that you were afraid to owe us anything," exclaimed Fulgence.

"Oh! the pleasure that he takes in returning the money is a very serious symptom to my mind," said Michel Chrestien. "It confirms some observations of my own. There is a spice of vanity in Lucien."

"He is a poet," said d'Arthez.

"But do you grudge me such a very natural feeling?" asked Lucien.

"We should bear in mind that he did not hide it," said Léon Giraud; "he is still open with us; but I am afraid that he may come to feel shy of us."

"And why?" Lucien asked.

"We can read your thoughts," answered Joseph Bridau.

"There is a diabolical spirit in you that will seek to justify courses which are utterly contrary to our principles. Instead of being a sophist in theory, you will be a sophist in practice."

"Ah! I am afraid of that," said d'Arthez. "You will carry on admirable debates in your own mind, Lucien, and take up a lofty position in theory, and end by blameworthy actions. You will never be at one with yourself."

"What ground have you for these charges?"

"Thy vanity, dear poet, is so great that it intrudes itself even into thy friendships!" cried Fulgence. "All vanity of that sort is a symptom of shocking egoism, and egoism poisons friendship."

"Oh! dear," said Lucien, "you cannot know how much I love you all."

"If you loved us as we love you, would you have been in such a hurry to return the money which we had such pleasure in lending? or have made so much of it?"

"We don't lend here; we give," said Joseph Bridau roughly.

"Don't think us unkind, dear boy," said Michel Chrestien; "we are looking forward. We are afraid lest some day you may prefer a petty revenge to the joys of pure friendship. Read Goethe's *Tasso*, the great master's greatest work, and you will see how the poet-hero loved gorgeous stuffs and banquets and triumph and applause. Very well, be Tasso without his folly. Perhaps the world and its

pleasures tempt you? Stay with us. Carry all the cravings of vanity into the world of imagination. Transpose folly. Keep virtue for daily wear, and let imagination run riot, instead of doing, as d'Arthez says, thinking high thoughts and living beneath them."

Lucien hung his head. His friends were right.

"I confess that you are stronger than I," he said, with a charming glance at them. "My back and shoulders are not made to bear the burden of Paris life; I cannot struggle bravely. We are born with different temperaments and faculties, and you know better than I that faults and virtues have their reverse side. I am tired already, I confess."

"We will stand by you," said d'Arthez; "it is just in these ways that a faithful friendship is of use."

"The help that I have just received is precarious, and every one of us is just as poor as another; want will soon overtake me again. Chrestien, at the service of the first that hires him, can do nothing with the publishers; Bianchon is quite out of it; d'Arthez's booksellers only deal in scientific and technical books—they have no connection with publishers of new literature; and as for Horace and Fulgence Ridal and Bridau, their work lies miles away from the booksellers. There is no help for it; I must make up my mind one way or another."

"Stick by us, and make up your mind to it," said Bianchon. "Bear up bravely, and trust in hard work."

"But what is hardship for you is death for me," Lucien put in quickly.

"Before the cock crows thrice," smiled Léon Giraud, "this man will betray the cause of work for an idle life and the vices of Paris."

"Where has work brought you?" asked Lucien, laughing.

"When you start out from Paris for Italy, you don't find Rome half-way," said Joseph Bridau. "You want your peas to grow ready buttered for you."

"They only grow like that for young dukes," said Michel Chrestien. "But the rest of us sow them and water them, and like the flavor of them all the better."

The conversation ended in a joke, and they changed the

subject. Lucien's friends, with their perspicacity and delicacy of heart, tried to efface the memory of the little quarrel; but Lucien knew thenceforward that it was no easy matter to deceive them. He soon fell into despair, which he was careful to hide from such stern mentors as he imagined them to be; and the Southern temper that runs so easily through the whole gamut of mental dispositions, set him making the most contradictory resolutions.

Again and again he talked of making the plunge into journalism; and time after time did his friends reply with a, "Mind you do nothing of the sort!"

"It would be the tomb of the beautiful, gracious Lucien whom we love and know," said d'Arthez.

"You would not hold out for long between the two extremes of toil and pleasure which make up a journalist's life, and resistance is the very foundation of virtue. You would be so delighted to exercise your power of life and death over the offspring of the brain, that you would be an out-and-out journalist in two months' time. To be a journalist—that is to turn Herod in the republic of letters. The man who will say anything will end by sticking at nothing. That was Napoleon's maxim, and it explains itself."

"But you would be with me, would you not?" asked Lucien.

"Not by that time," said Fulgence. "If you were a journalist, you would no more think of us than the Opera girl in all her glory, with her adorers and her silk-lined carriage, thinks of the village at home and her cows and her sabots. You could never resist the temptation to pen a witticism, though it should bring tears to a friend's eyes. I come across journalists in theater lobbies; it makes me shudder to see them. Journalism is an inferno, a bottomless pit of iniquity and treachery and lies; no one can traverse it undefiled, unless, like Dante, he is protected by Virgil's sacred laurel."

But the more the set of friends opposed the idea of journalism, the more Lucien's desire to know its perils grew and tempted him. He began to debate within his own mind;

was it not ridiculous to allow want to find him a second time defenseless? He bethought him of the failure of his attempts to dispose of his first novel, and felt but little tempted to begin a second. How, besides, was he to live while he was writing another romance? One month of privation had exhausted his stock of patience. Why should he not do nobly that which journalists did ignobly and without principle? His friends insulted him with their doubts; he would convince them of his strength of mind. Some day, perhaps, he would be of use to them; he would be the herald of their fame!

"And what sort of a friendship is it which recoils from complicity?" demanded he one evening of Michel Chrestien; Lucien and Léon Giraud were walking home with their friend.

"We shrink from nothing," Michel Chrestien made reply. "If you were so unlucky as to kill your mistress, I would help you hide your crime, and could still respect you; but if you were to turn spy, I should shun you with abhorrence, for a spy is systematically shameless and base. There you have journalism summed up in a sentence. Friendship can pardon error and the hasty impulse of passion; it is bound to be inexorable when a man deliberately traffics in his own soul, and intellect, and opinions."

"Why can I not turn journalist to sell my volume of poetry and the novel, and then give up at once?"

"Machiavelli might do so, but not Lucien de Rubempré," said Léon Giraud.

"Very well," exclaimed Lucien; "I will show you that I can do as much as Machiavelli."

"Oh!" cried Michel, grasping Léon's hand, "you have done it, Léon.—Lucien," he continued, "you have three hundred francs in hand; you can live comfortably for three months; very well, then, work hard and write another romance. D'Arthez and Fulgence will help you with the plot; you will improve, you will be a novelist. And I, meanwhile, will enter one of these *lupanars* of thought; for three months I will be a journalist. I will sell your books to some bookseller or other by attacking his publications; I will write the articles myself; I will get others for you. We will organize

a success; you shall be a great man, and still remain our Lucien."

"You must despise me very much, if you think that I should perish while you escape," said the poet.

"O Lord, forgive him; it is a child!" cried Michel Chretien.

When Lucien's intellect had been stimulated by the evenings spent in d'Arthez's garret, he had made some study of the jokes and articles in the smaller newspapers. He was at least the equal, he felt, of the wittiest contributors; in private he tried some mental gymnastics of the kind, and went out one morning with the triumphant idea of finding some colonel of such light skirmishers of the press and enlisting in their ranks. He dressed in his best and crossed the bridges, thinking as he went that authors, journalists, and men of letters, his future comrades, in short, would show him rather more kindness and disinterestedness than the two species of booksellers who had so dashed his hopes. He should meet with fellow-feeling, and something of the kindly and grateful affection which he found in the *cénacle* of the Rue des Quatre-Vents. Tormented by emotion, consequent upon the presentiments to which men of imagination cling so fondly, half believing, half battling with their belief in them, he arrived in the Rue Saint-Fiacre off the Boulevard Montmartre. Before a house, occupied by the offices of a small newspaper, he stopped, and at the sight of it his heart began to throb as heavily as the pulses of a youth upon the threshold of some evil haunt.

Nevertheless, upstairs he went, and found the offices in the low *entresol* between the ground floor and the first story. The first room was divided down the middle by a partition, the lower half of solid wood, the upper lattice work to the ceiling. In this apartment Lucien discovered a one-armed pensioner supporting several reams of paper on his head with his remaining hand, while between his teeth he held the passbook which the Inland Revenue Department requires every newspaper to produce with each issue. This ill-favored individual, owner of a yellow countenance covered with red

excrescences, to which he owed his nickname of "Coloquinte," indicated a personage behind the lattice as the Cerberus of the paper. This latter was an elderly officer with a medal on his chest and a black silk skull-cap on his head; his nose was almost hidden by a pair of grizzled mustaches, and his person was hidden as completely in an ample blue overcoat as the body of the turtle in its carapace.

"From what date do you wish your subscription to commence, sir?" inquired the Emperor's officer.

"I did not come about a subscription," returned Lucien. Looking about him, he saw a placard fastened on a door, corresponding to the one by which he had entered, and read the words—EDITOR'S OFFICE, and below in smaller letters, *No admittance except on business.*

"A complaint, I expect?" replied the veteran. "Ah! yes; we have been hard on Mariette. What would you have? I don't know the why and wherefore of it yet.—But if you want satisfaction, I am ready for you," he added, glancing at a collection of small arms and foils stacked in a corner, the armory of the modern warrior.

"That was still further from my intention, sir. I have come to speak to the editor."

"Nobody is ever here before four o'clock."

"Look you here, Giroudeau, old chap," remarked a voice, "I make it eleven columns; eleven columns at five francs apiece is fifty-five francs, and I have only been paid forty; so you owe me another fifteen francs, as I have been telling you."

These words proceeded from a little weasel-face, pallid and semi-transparent as the half-boiled white of an egg; two slits of eyes looked out of it, mild blue in tint, but appallingly malignant in expression; and the owner, an insignificant young man, was completely hidden by the veteran's opaque person. It was a blood-curdling voice, a sound between the mewling of a cat and the wheezy chokings of a hyena.

"Yes, yes, my little militiaman," retorted he of the medal, "but you are counting the headings and white lines. I have Finot's instructions to add up the totals of the lines, and to divide them by the proper number for each column;

and after I performed that concentrating operation on your copy, there were three columns less."

"He doesn't pay for the blanks, the Jew! He reckons them in though when he sends up the total of his work to his partner, and he gets paid for them too. I will go and see Étienne Lousteau, Vernou——"

"I cannot go beyond my orders, my boy," said the veteran. "What! do you cry out against your foster-mother for a matter of fifteen francs? you that turn out an article as easily as I smoke a cigar. Fifteen francs! why, you will give a bowl of punch the less to your friends, or win an extra game of billiards, and there's an end of it!"

"Finot's savings will cost him very dear," said the contributor as he took his departure.

"Now, would not anybody think that he was Rousseau and Voltaire rolled in one?" the cashier remarked to himself as he glanced at Lucien.

"I will come in again at four, sir," said Lucien.

While the argument proceeded, Lucien had been looking about him. He saw upon the walls the portraits of Benjamin Constant, General Foy, and the seventeen illustrious orators of the Left, interspersed with caricatures at the expense of the Government; but he looked more particularly at the door of the sanctuary where, no doubt, the paper was elaborated, the witty paper that amused him daily, and enjoyed the privilege of ridiculing kings and the most portentous events, of calling anything and everything in question with a jest. Then he sauntered along the boulevards. It was an entirely novel amusement; and so agreeable did he find it, that, looking at the turret clocks, he saw the hour hands were pointing to four, and only then remembered that he had not breakfasted.

He went at once in the direction of the Rue Saint-Fiacre, climbed the stair, and opened the door.

The veteran officer was absent; but the old pensioner, sitting on a pile of stamped papers, was munching a crust and acting as sentinel resignedly. Coloquinte was as much accustomed to his work in the office as to the fatigue duty of former days, understanding as much or as little about



it as of the why and wherefore of forced marches made by the Emperor's orders. Lucien was inspired with the bold idea of deceiving that formidable functionary. He settled his hat on his head, and walked into the editor's office as if he were quite at home.

Looking eagerly about him, he beheld a round table covered with a green cloth, and half-a-dozen cherrywood chairs, newly reseatd with straw. The colored brick floor had not been waxed, but it was clean; so clean that the public, evidently, seldom entered the room. There was a mirror above the chimney-piece, and on the ledge below, amid a sprinkling of visiting-cards, stood a shopkeepers' clock, smothered with dust, and a couple of candlesticks with tallow dips thrust into their sockets. A few antique newspapers lay on the table beside an inkstand containing some black lacquer-like substance, and a collection of quill pens twisted into stars. Sundry dirty scraps of paper, covered with almost undecipherable hieroglyphs, proved to be manuscript articles torn across the top by the compositor to check off the sheets as they were set up. He admired a few rather clever caricatures, sketched on bits of brown paper by somebody who evidently had tried to kill time by killing something else to keep his hand in.

Other works of art were pinned to the cheap sea-green wallpaper. These consisted of nine pen-and-ink illustrations for *Le Solitaire*. The work had attained to such an unheard-of European popularity, that journalists evidently were tired of it.—“The Solitary makes his first appearance in the provinces; sensation among the women.—The Solitary perused at a château.—Effect of the Solitary on domestic animals.—The Solitary explained to savage tribes, with the most brilliant results.—The Solitary translated into Chinese and presented by the author to the Emperor at Pekin.—The Mont Sauvage, Rape of Elodie.”—(Lucien thought this caricature very shocking, but he could not help laughing at it.)—“The Solitary under a canopy conducted in triumphal procession by the newspapers.—The Solitary breaks the press to splinters, and wounds the printers.—Read backwards, the superior beauties of the Solitary produce a sensation at the

Académie.”—On a newspaper-wrapper Lucien noticed a sketch of a contributor holding out his hat, and beneath it the words, “Finot! my hundred francs,” and a name, since grown more notorious than famous.

Between the window and the chimney-piece stood a writing-table, a mahogany armchair, and a waste-paper basket on a strip of hearth-rug; the dust lay thick on all these objects. There were short curtains in the windows. About a score of new books lay on the writing-table, deposited there apparently during the day, together with prints, music, snuff-boxes of the “Charter” pattern, a copy of the ninth edition of *Le Solitaire* (the great joke of the moment), and some ten unopened letters.

Lucien had taken stock of this strange furniture, and made reflections of the most exhaustive kind upon it, when, the clock striking five, he returned to question the pensioner. Coloquinte had finished his crust, and was waiting with the patience of a commissionaire, for the man of medals, who perhaps was taking an airing on the boulevard.

At this conjuncture the rustle of a dress sounded on the stair, and the light unmistakable footstep of a woman on the threshold. The newcomer was passably pretty. She addressed herself to Lucien.

“Sir,” she said, “I know why you cry up Mlle. Virginie’s hats so much; and I have come to put down my name for a year’s subscription in the first place; but tell me your conditions——”

“I am not connected with the paper, madame.”

“Oh!”

“A subscription dating from October?” inquired the pensioner.

“What does the lady want to know?” asked the veteran, reappearing on the scene.

The fair milliner and the retired military man were soon deep in converse; and when Lucien, beginning to lose patience, came back to the first room, he heard the conclusion of the matter.

“Why, I shall be delighted, quite delighted, sir. Mlle.

Florentine can come to my shop and choose anything she likes. Ribbons are in my department. So it is all quite settled. You will say no more about Virginie, a botcher that cannot design a new shape, while I have ideas of my own, I have."

Lucien heard a sound as of coins dropping into a cash-box, and the veteran began to make up his books for the day.

"I have been waiting here for an hour, sir," Lucien began, looking not a little annoyed.

"And 'they' have not come yet!" exclaimed Napoleon's veteran, civilly feigning concern. "I am not surprised at that. It is some time since I have seen 'them' here. It is the middle of the month, you see. Those fine fellows only turn up on pay days—the 29th or the 30th."

"And M. Finot?" asked Lucien, having caught the editor's name.

"He is in the Rue Feydeau, that's where he lives. Coloquinte, old chap, just take him everything that has come in to-day when you go with the paper to the printers."

"Where is the newspaper put together?" Lucien said to himself.

"The newspaper?" repeated the officer, as he received the rest of the stamp money from Coloquinte, "the newspaper?—broum! broum!—(Mind you are round at the printers by six o'clock to-morrow, old chap, to send off the porters.)—The newspaper, sir, is written in the street, at the writers' houses, in the printing-office between eleven and twelve o'clock at night. In the Emperor's time, sir, these shops for spoiled paper were not known. Oh! he would have cleared them out with four men and a corporal; they would not have come over *him* with their talk. But that is enough of prattling. If my nephew finds it worth his while, and so long as they write for the son of the Other (broum! broum!)—after all, there is no harm in that. Ah! by the way, subscribers don't seem to me to be advancing in serried columns; I shall leave my post."

"You seem to know all about the newspaper, sir," Lucien began.

"From a business point of view, *broum! broum!*" coughed the soldier, clearing his throat. "From three to five francs per column, according to ability.—Fifty lines to a column, forty letters to a line; no blanks; there you are! As for the staff, they are queer fish, little youngsters whom I wouldn't take on for the commissariat; and because they make fly tracks on sheets of white paper, they look down, forsooth, on an old captain of Dragoons of the Guard, that retired with a major's rank after entering every European capital with Napoleon."

The soldier of Napoleon brushed his coat, and made as if he would go out, but Lucien, swept to the door, had courage enough to make a stand.

"I came to be a contributor of the paper," he said. "I am full of respect, I vow and declare, for a captain of the Imperial Guard, those men of bronze——"

"Well said, my little civilian, there are several kinds of contributors; which kind do you wish to be?" replied the trooper, bearing down on Lucien, and descending the stairs. At the foot of the flight he stopped, but it was only to light a cigar at the porter's box.

"If any subscribers come, you see them and take note of them, Mother Chollet.—Simply subscribers, never know anything but subscribers," he added, seeing that Lucien followed him. "Finot is my nephew; he is the only one of my family that has done anything to relieve me in my position. So when anybody comes to pick a quarrel with Finot, he finds old Giroudeau, Captain of the Dragoons of the Guard, that set out as a private in a cavalry regiment in the army of the Sambre-et-Meuse, and was fencing-master for five years to the 1st Hussars, army of Italy! One, two, and the man that had any complaints to make would be turned off into the dark," he added, making a lunge. "Now writers, my boy, are in different corps; there is the writer who writes and draws his pay; there is the writer who writes and gets nothing (a volunteer we call him); and, lastly, there is the writer who writes nothing, and he is by no means the stupidest, for he makes no mistakes; he gives himself out for a literary man, he is on the paper, he treats us to dinners,

he loafes about the theaters, he keeps an actress, he is very well off. What do you mean to be?"

"The man that does good work and gets good pay."

"You are like the recruits; they all want to be marshals of France. Take old Giroudeau's word for it, and turn right about, in double quick time, and go and pick up nails in the gutter like that good fellow yonder; you can tell by the look of him that he has been in the army.—Isn't it a shame that an old soldier who has walked into the jaws of death hundreds of times should be picking up old iron in the streets of Paris? Ah! God A'mighty! 'twas a shabby trick to desert the Emperor.—Well, my boy, the individual you saw this morning has made his forty francs a month. Are you going to do better? And, according to Finot, he is the cleverest man on the staff."

"When you enlisted in the Sambre-et-Meuse, did they talk about danger?"

"Rather."

"Very well?"

"Very well. Go and see my nephew Finot, a good fellow, as good a fellow as you will find, if you can find him that is, for he is like a fish, always on the move. In his way of business, there is no writing, you see, it is setting others to write. That sort like gallivanting about with actresses better than scribbling on sheets of paper, it seems. Oh! they are queer customers, they are. Hope I may have the honor of seeing you again."

With that the cashier raised his formidable loaded cane, one of the defenders of Germanicus, and walked off, leaving Lucien in the street, as much bewildered by this picture of the newspaper world as he had formerly been by the practical aspects of literature at Messrs. Vidal and Porchon's establishment.

Ten several times did Lucien repair to the Rue Feydeau in search of Andoche Finot, and ten times he failed to find that gentleman. He went the first thing in the morning, Finot had not come in. At noon, Finot had gone out; he was breakfasting at such and such a café. At the café, in answer to inquiries of the waitress, made after surmount-

ing unspeakable repugnance, Lucien heard that Finot had just left the place. Lucien, at length tired out, began to regard Finot as a mythical and fabulous character; it appeared simpler to waylay Étienne Lousteau at Flicoteaux's. That youthful journalist would, doubtless, explain the mysteries that enveloped the paper for which he wrote.

Since the day, a hundred times blessed, when Lucien made the acquaintance of Daniel d'Arthez, he had taken another seat at Flicoteaux's. The two friends dined side by side, talking in lowered voices of the higher literature, of suggested subjects, and ways of presenting, opening up, and developing them. At the present time Daniel d'Arthez was correcting the manuscript of *The Archer of Charles IX.* He reconstructed whole chapters, and wrote the fine passages found therein, as well as the magnificent preface, which is, perhaps, the best thing in the book, and throws so much light on the work of the young school of literature. One day it so happened that Daniel had been waiting for Lucien, who now sat with his friend's hand in his own, when he saw Étienne Lousteau turn the door-handle. Lucien instantly dropped Daniel's hand, and told the waiter that he would dine at his old place by the counter. D'Arthez gave Lucien a glance of divine kindness, in which reproach was wrapped in forgiveness. The glance cut the poet to the quick; he took Daniel's hand and grasped it anew.

"It is an important question of business for me; I will tell you about it afterwards," said he.

Lucien was in his old place by the time that Lousteau reached the table; as the first comer, he greeted his acquaintance; they soon struck up a conversation, which grew so lively that Lucien went off in search of the manuscript of the *Marguerites*, while Lousteau finished his dinner. He had obtained leave to lay his sonnets before the journalist, and mistook the civility of the latter for willingness to find him a publisher, or a place on the paper. When Lucien came hurrying back again, he saw d'Arthez resting an elbow on the table in a corner of the restaurant, and knew that his friend was watching him with melancholy eyes, but he would not see d'Arthez just then; he felt the sharp

fangs of poverty, the goadings of ambition, and followed Lousteau.

In the late afternoon the journalist and the neophyte went to the Luxembourg, and sat down under the trees in that part of the gardens which lies between the broad Avenue de l'Observatoire and the Rue de l'Ouest. The Rue de l'Ouest at that time was a long morass, bounded by planks and market-gardens; the houses were all at the end nearest the Rue de Vaugirard; and the walk through the gardens was so little frequented, that at the hour when Paris dines, two lovers might fall out and exchange the earnest of reconciliation without fear of intruders. The only possible spoil-sport was the pensioner on duty at the little iron gate on the Rue de l'Ouest, if that gray-headed veteran should take it into his head to lengthen his monotonous beat. There on a bench beneath the lime trees, Étienne Lousteau sat and listened to sample-sonnets from the *Marguerites*.

Étienne Lousteau, after a two years' apprenticeship, was on the staff of a newspaper; he had his foot in the stirrup; he reckoned some of the celebrities of the day among his friends; altogether, he was an imposing personage in Lucien's eyes. Wherefore, while Lucien untied the string about the *Marguerites*, he judged it necessary to make some sort of preface.

"The sonnet, monsieur," said he, "is one of the most difficult forms of poetry. It has fallen almost entirely into disuse. No Frenchman can hope to rival Petrarch; for the language in which the Italian wrote, being so infinitely more pliant than French, lends itself to play of thought which our positivism (pardon the use of the expression) rejects. So it seemed to me that a volume of sonnets would be something quite new. Victor Hugo has appropriated the ode, Canalis writes lighter verse, Béranger has monopolized songs, Casimir Delavigne has taken tragedy, and Lamartine the poetry of meditation."

"Are you a 'Classic' or a 'Romantic'?" inquired Lousteau.

Lucien's astonishment betrayed such complete ignorance

of the state of affairs in the republic of letters, that Lousteau thought it necessary to enlighten him.

"You have come up in the middle of a pitched battle, my dear fellow; you must make your decision at once. Literature is divided, in the first place, into several zones, but our great men are ranged in two hostile camps. The Royalists are 'Romantics,' the Liberals are 'Classics.' The divergence of taste in matters literary and divergence of political opinion coincide; and the result is a war with weapons of every sort, double-edged witticisms, subtle calumnies, and nicknames *à outrance*, between the rising and the waning glory, and ink is shed in torrents. The odd part of it is that the Royalist-Romantics are all for liberty in literature, and for repealing laws and conventions; while the Liberal-Classics are for maintaining the unities, the Alexandrine, and the classical theme. So opinions in politics on either side are directly at variance with literary taste. If you are eclectic, you will have no one for you. Which side do you take?"

"Which is the winning side?"

"The Liberal newspapers have far more subscribers than the Royalist and Ministerial journals; still, though Canalis is for Church and King, and patronized by the Court and the clergy, he reaches other readers.—Pshaw! sonnets date back to an epoch before Boileau's time," said Étienne, seeing Lucien's dismay at the prospect of choosing between two banners. "Be a Romantic. The Romantics are young men, and the Classics are pedants; the Romantics will gain the day."

The word "pedant" was the latest epithet taken up by Romantic journalism to heap confusion on the Classical faction.

Lucien began to read, choosing first of all the title-sonnets.

#### EASTER DAISIES.

The daisies in the meadows, not in vain,  
In red and white and gold before our eyes,  
Have written an idyll for man's sympathies,  
And set his heart's desire in language plain.



Gold stamens set in silver filigrane  
 Reveal the treasures which we idolize;  
 And all the cost of struggle for the prize  
 Is symbolized by a secret blood-red stain.

Was it because your petals once uncurled  
 When Jesus rose upon a fairer world,  
 And from wings shaken for a heav'nward flight  
 Shed grace, that still as autumn reappears  
 You bloom again to tell of dead delight,  
 To bring us back the flower of twenty years?

Lucien felt piqued by Lousteau's complete indifference during the reading of the sonnet; he was unfamiliar as yet with the disconcerting impassibility of the professional critic, wearied by much reading of poetry, prose, and plays. Lucien was accustomed to applause. He choked down his disappointment and read another, a favorite with Mme. de Bargeton and with some of his friends in the Rue des Quatre-Vents.

"This one, perhaps, will draw a word from him," he thought.

#### THE MARGUERITE.

I am the Marguerite, fair and tall I grew  
 In velvet meadows, 'mid the flowers a star.  
 They sought me for my beauty near and far;  
 My dawn, I thought, should be forever new.

But now an all unwished-for gift I rue,  
 A fatal ray of knowledge shed to mar  
 My radiant star-crown grown oracular,  
 For I must speak and give an answer true.

An end of silence and of quiet days.  
 The Lover with two words my counsel prays;  
 And when my secret from my heart is reft,  
 When all my silver petals scattered lie,  
 I am the only flower neglected left,  
 Cast down and trodden under foot to die.

At the end, the poet looked up at his Aristarchus. Étienne Lousteau was gazing at the trees in the Pépinière.

"Well?" asked Lucien.

"Well, my dear fellow, go on! I am listening to you, am I not? That fact in itself is as good as praise in Paris."

"Have you had enough?" Lucien inquired.

"Go on," the other answered abruptly enough.

Lucien proceeded to read the following sonnet, but his heart was dead within him; Lousteau's inscrutable composure froze his utterance. If he had come a little further upon the road, he would have known that between writer and writer silence or abrupt speech, under such circumstances, is a betrayal of jealousy, and outspoken admiration means a sense of relief over the discovery that the work is not above the average after all.

#### THE CAMELLIA.

In Nature's book, if rightly understood,  
The rose means love, and red for beauty glows;  
A pure, sweet spirit in the violet blows,  
And bright the lily gleams in lowlihood.

But this strange bloom, by sun and wind unwooed,  
Seems to expand and blossom 'mid the snows,  
A lily scepterless, a scentless rose,  
For dainty listlessness of maidenhood.

Yet at the opera-house the petals trace  
For modesty a fitting aureole;  
An alabaster wreath to lay, methought,  
In dusky hair o'er some fair woman's face  
Which kindles ev'n such love within the soul  
As sculptured marble forms by Phidias wrought.

"What do you think of my poor sonnets?" Lucien asked, coming straight to the point.

"Do you want the truth?"

"I am young enough to like the truth, and so anxious to succeed that I can hear it without taking offense, but not without despair," replied Lucien.

"Well, my dear fellow, the first sonnet, from its involved style, was evidently written at Angoulême; it gave you so much trouble, no doubt, that you cannot give it up. The second and third smack of Paris already; but read us one more sonnet," he added, with a gesture that seemed charming to the provincial.

Encouraged by the request, Lucien read with more confidence, choosing a sonnet which d'Arthez and Bridau liked best, perhaps on account of its color.

## THE TULIP.

I am the Tulip from Batavia's shore;  
 The thrifty Fleming for my beauty rare  
 Pays a king's ransom, when that I am fair,  
 And tall, and straight, and pure my petal's core.

And, like some Yolande of the days of yore,  
 My long and amply folded skirts I wear,  
 O'er-painted with the blazon that I bear  
 —Gules, a fess azure; purpure, fretty, or.

The fingers of the Gardener divine  
 Have woven for me my vesture fair and fine,  
 Of threads of sunlight and of purple stain;  
 No flower so glorious in the garden bed,  
 But Nature, woe is me, no fragrance shed  
 Within my cup of Orient porcelain.

"Well?" asked Lucien after a pause, immeasurably long, as it seemed to him.

"My dear fellow," Étienne said, gravely surveying the tips of Lucien's boots (he had brought the pair from Angoulême, and was wearing them out). "My dear fellow, I strongly recommend you to put your ink on your boots to save blacking, and to take your pens for toothpicks, so that when you come away from Flicoteaux's you can swagger along this picturesque alley looking as if you had dined. Get a situation of any sort or description. Run errands for a bailiff if you have a heart, be a shopman if your back is strong enough, enlist if you happen to have a taste for military music. You have the stuff of three poets in you; but before you can reach your public, you will have time to die of starvation six times over, if you intend to live on the proceeds of your poetry, that is. And from your too unsophisticated discourse, it would seem to be your intention to coin money out of your inkstand.

"I say nothing as to your verses; they are a good deal better than all the poetical wares that are cumbering the ground in booksellers' backshops just now. Elegant 'night-ingales' of that sort cost a little more than the others, because they are printed on hand-made paper, but they nearly all of them come down at last to the banks of the Seine. You may study their range of notes there any day if you

care to make an instructive pilgrimage along the Quais from old Jérôme's stall by the Pont Notre Dame to the Pont Royal. You will find them all there—all the *Essays in Verse*, the *Inspirations*, the lofty flights, the hymns, and songs, and ballads, and odes; all the nestfuls hatched during the last seven years, in fact. There lie their muses, thick with dust, bespattered by every passing cab, at the mercy of every profane hand that turns them over to look at the vignette on the title-page.

"You know nobody; you have access to no newspaper, so your *Marguerites* will remain demurely folded as you hold them now. They will never open out to the sun of publicity in fair fields with broad margins enameled with the florets which Dauriat the illustrious, the king of the Wooden Galleries, scatters with a lavish hand for poets known to fame. I came to Paris as you came, poor boy, with a plentiful stock of illusions, impelled by irrepressible longings for glory—and I found the realities of the craft, the practical difficulties of the trade, the hard facts of poverty. In my enthusiasm (it is kept well under control now), my first ebullition of youthful spirits, I did not see the social machinery at work; so I had to learn to see it by bumping against the wheels and bruising myself against the shafts, covering myself with oil, hearing the clatter of fly-wheels and chains. Now you are about to learn, as I learned, that between you and all these fair dreamed-of things lies the strife of men, and passions, and necessities.

"Willy-nilly, you must take part in a terrible battle; book against book, man against man, party against party; make war you must, and that systematically, or you will be abandoned by your own party. And they are mean contests; struggles which leave you disenchanted, and wearied, and depraved, and all in pure waste; for it often happens that you put forth all your strength to win laurels for a man whom you despise, and maintain, in spite of yourself, that some second-rate writer is a genius.

"There is a world behind the scenes in the theater of literature. The public in front sees unexpected or well-deserved success, and applauds; the public does *not* see the

preparations, ugly as they always are, the painted supers, the *claqueurs* hired to applaud, the stage carpenters, and all that lies behind the scenes. You are still among the audience. Abdicate, there is still time, before you set your foot on the lowest step of the throne for which so many ambitious spirits are contending, and do not sell your honor, as I do, for a livelihood." Étienne's eyes filled with tears as he spoke.

"Do you know how I make a living?" he continued passionately. "The little stock of money they gave me at home was soon eaten up. A piece of mine was accepted at the Théâtre-Français just as I came to an end of it. At the Théâtre-Français the influence of a first gentleman of the bedchamber, or of a prince of the blood, would not be enough to secure a turn of favor; the actors only make concessions to those who threaten their self-love. If it is in your power to spread a report that the *jeune premier* has the asthma, the leading lady a fistula where you please, and the soubrette has foul breath, then your piece would be played to-morrow. I do not know whether, in two years' time, I who speak to you now, shall be in a position to exercise such power. You need so many to back you. And where and how am I to gain my bread meanwhile?

"I tried lots of things; I wrote a novel, anonymously; old Doguereau gave me two hundred francs for it, and he did not make very much out of it himself. Then it grew plain to me that journalism alone could give me a living. The next thing was to find my way into those shops. I will not tell you all the advances I made, nor how often I begged in vain. I will say nothing of the six months I spent as extra hand on a paper, and was told that I scared subscribers away, when as a fact I attracted them. Pass over the insults I put up with. At this moment I am doing the plays at the boulevard theaters, almost gratis, for a paper belonging to Finot, that stout young fellow who breakfasts two or three times a month, even now, at the Café Voltaire (but you don't go there). I live by selling tickets that managers give me to bribe a good word in the paper, and reviewers, copies of books. In short, Finot once satisfied, I am allowed

to write for and against various commercial articles, and I traffic in tribute paid in kind by various tradesmen. A facetious notice of a Carminative Toilet Lotion, *Pâte des Sultanes*, Cephalic Oil, or Brazilian Mixture brings me in twenty or thirty francs.

"I am obliged to dun the publishers when they don't send in a sufficient number of reviewers' copies; Finot, as editor, appropriates two and sells them, and I must have two to sell. If a book of capital importance comes out, and the publisher is stingy with copies, his life is made a burden to him. The craft is vile, but I live by it, and so do scores of others. Do not imagine that things are any better in public life. There is corruption everywhere in both regions; every man is corrupt or corrupts others. If there is any publishing enterprise somewhat larger than usual afoot, the trade will pay me something to buy neutrality. The amount of my income varies, therefore, directly with the prospectuses. When prospectuses break out like a rash, money pours into my pockets; I stand treat all round. When trade is dull, I dine at Flicoteaux's.

"Actresses will pay you likewise for praise, but the wiser among them pay for criticism. To be passed over in silence is what they dread the most; and the very best thing of all, from their point of view, is criticism which draws down a reply; it is far more effectual than bald praise, forgotten as soon as read, and it costs more in consequence. Celebrity, my dear fellow, is based upon controversy. I am a hired bravo; I ply my trade among ideas and reputations, commercial, literary, and dramatic; I make some fifty crowns a month; I can sell a novel for five hundred francs; and I am beginning to be looked upon as a man to be feared. Some day, instead of living with Florine at the expense of a drug-gist who gives himself the airs of a lord, I shall be in a house of my own; I shall be on the staff of a leading newspaper, I shall have a *feuilleton*; and on that day, my dear fellow, Florine will become a great actress. As for me, I am not sure what I shall be when that time comes, a minister or an honest man—all things are still possible."

He raised his humiliated head, and looked out at the green

leaves, with an expression of despairing self-condemnation dreadful to see.

"And I had a great tragedy accepted!" he went on. "And among my papers there is a poem, which will die. And I was a good fellow, and my heart was clean! I used to dream lofty dreams of love for great ladies, queens in the great world; and—my mistress is an actress at the *Panorama-Dramatique*. And lastly, if a bookseller declines to send a copy of a book to my paper, I will run down work which is good, as I know."

Lucien was moved to tears, and he grasped Étienne's hand in his. The journalist rose to his feet, and the pair went up and down the broad Avenue de l'Observatoire, as if their lungs craved ampler breathing space.

"Outside the world of letters," Étienne Lousteau continued, "not a single creature suspects that everyone who succeeds in that world—who has a certain vogue, that is to say, or comes into fashion, or gains reputation, or renown or fame, or favor with the public (for by these names we know the rungs of the ladder by which we climb to the higher heights above and beyond them)—everyone who comes even thus far is the hero of a dreadful Odyssey. Brilliant portents rise above the mental horizon through a combination of a thousand accidents; conditions change so swiftly that no two men have been known to reach success by the same road. Canalis and Nathan are two dissimilar cases; things never fall out in the same way twice. There is d'Arthez, who knocks himself to pieces with work—he will make a famous name by some other chance.

"This so much desired reputation is nearly always crowned prostitution. Yes; the poorest kind of literature is the hapless creature freezing at a street corner; second-rate literature is the kept-mistress picked out of the brothels of journalism, and I am her bully; lastly, there is lucky literature, the flaunting, insolent courtesan who has a house of her own and pays taxes, who receives great lords, treating or ill-treating them as she pleases, who has liveried servants and a carriage, and can afford to keep greedy creditors waiting. Ah! and for yet others, for me not so very long ago, for

you to-day—she is a white-robed angel with many-colored wings, bearing a green palm branch in the one hand, and in the other a flaming sword. An angel, something akin to the mythological abstraction which lives at the bottom of a well, and to the poor and honest girl who lives a life of exile in the outskirts of the great city, earning every penny with a noble fortitude and in the full light of virtue, returning to heaven inviolate of body and soul; unless, indeed, she come to lie at the last, soiled, despoiled, polluted, and forgotten, on a pauper's bier. As for the men whose brains are encompassed with bronze, whose hearts are still warm under the snows of experience, they are found but seldom in the country that lies at our feet," he added, pointing to the great city seething in the late afternoon light.

A vision of d'Arthez and his friends flashed upon Lucien's sight, and made appeal to him for a moment; but Lousteau's appalling lamentation carried him away.

"They are very few and far between in that great fermenting vat; rare as love in love-making, rare as fortunes honestly made in business, rare as the journalist whose hands are clean. The experience of the first man who told me all that I am telling you was thrown away upon me, and mine no doubt will be wasted upon you. It is always the same old story year after year; the same eager rush to Paris from the provinces; the same, not to say a growing number of beardless, ambitious boys, who advance, head erect and the heart beating high in them, to storm the citadel of the Fashion—that Princess Tourandocte of the *Mille et un Jours*—each one of them fain to be her Prince Calaf. But never a one of them reads the riddle. One by one they drop some into the trench where failures lie, some into the mire of journalism, some again into the quagmires of the book trade.

"They pick up a living, these beggars, what with the graphical notices, penny-a-lining, and scraps of news for papers. They become booksellers' hacks for the clef-headed dealers in printed paper, who would sooner take rubbish that goes off in a fortnight than a masterpiece which requires time to sell. The life is crushed out of the great



before they reach the butterfly stage. They live by shame and dishonor. They are ready to write down a rising genius or to praise him to the skies at a word from the pacha of the *Constitutionnel*, the *Quotidienne*, or the *Débats*, at a sign from a publisher, at the request of a jealous comrade, or (as not seldom happens) simply for a dinner. Some surmount the obstacles, and these forget the misery of their early days. I, who am telling you this, have been putting the best that is in me into newspaper articles for six months past for a blackguard who gives them out as his own and has secured a *feuilleton* in another paper on the strength of them. He has not taken me on as his collaborator, he has not given me so much as a five-franc piece, but I hold out a hand to grasp his when we meet; I cannot help myself."

"And why?" Lucien asked indignantly.

"I may want to put a dozen lines into his *feuilleton* some day," Lousteau answered coolly. "In short, my dear fellow, in literature you will not make money by hard work, that is not the secret of success; the point is to exploit the work of somebody else. A newspaper proprietor is a contractor, we are the bricklayers. The more mediocre the man, the better his chance of getting on among mediocrities; he can play the toad-eater, put up with any treatment, and flatter all the little base passions of the sultans of literature. There is Hector Merlin, who came from Limoges a short time ago; he is writing political articles already for a Right Center daily, and he is at work on our little paper as well. I have seen an editor drop his hat and Merlin pick it up. The fellow was careful never to give offense, and slipped into the thick of the fight between rival ambitions. I am sorry for you. It is as if I saw in you the self that I used to be, and sure am I that in one or two years' time you will be what I am now.—You will think that there is some lurking jealousy or personal motive in this bitter counsel, but it is prompted by the despair of a damned soul that can never leave hell.—No one ventures to utter such things as these. You hear the groans of anguish from a man wounded in the heart, crying like a second Job from the ashes, 'Behold sores!'"

"But whether I fight upon this field or elsewhere, fight I must," said Lucien.

"Then, be sure of this," returned Lousteau, "if you have anything in you, the war will know no truce, the best chance of success lies in an empty head. The austerity of your conscience, clear as yet, will relax when you see that a man holds your future in his two hands, when a word from such a man means life to you, and he will not say that word. For, believe me, the most brutal bookseller in the trade is not so insolent, so hard-hearted to a newcomer as the celebrity of the day. The bookseller sees a possible loss of money, while the writer of books dreads a possible rival; the first shows you the door, the second crushes the life out of you. To do really good work, my boy, means that you will draw out the energy, sap, and tenderness of your nature at every dip of the pen in the ink, to set it forth for the world in passion and sentiment and phrases. Yes; instead of acting, you will write; you will sing songs instead of fighting; you will love and hate and live in your books; and then, after all, when you shall have reserved your riches for your style, your gold and purple for your characters, and you yourself are walking the streets of Paris in rags, rejoicing in that, rivaling the State Register, you have authorized the existence of a being styled Adolphe, Corinne or Clarissa, René or Manon; when you shall have spoiled your life and your digestion to give life to that creation then you shall see it slandered, betrayed, sold, swept away into the back waters of oblivion by journalists, and buried out of sight by your best friends. How can you afford to wait until the day when your creation shall rise again, raised from the dead—how? when? and by whom? Take a magnificent book, the *pianto* of unbelief; *Obermann* is a solitary wanderer in the desert places of booksellers' warehouses, has been a 'nightingale,' ironically so called, from the very beginning; when will his Easter come? Who knows? To begin with, to find somebody bold enough to print *Marguerites*; not to pay for them, but simply to print them and you will see some queer things."

The fierce tirade, delivered in every tone of the passion

feeling which it expressed, fell upon Lucien's spirit like an avalanche, and left a sense of glacial cold. For one moment he stood silent; then, as he felt the terrible stimulating charm of difficulty beginning to work upon him, his courage blazed up. He grasped Lousteau's hand.

"I will triumph!" he cried aloud.

"Good!" said the other, "one more Christian given over to the wild beasts in the arena.—There is a first-night performance at the Panorama-Dramatique, my dear fellow; it doesn't begin till eight, so you can change your coat, come properly dressed in fact, and call for me. I am living on the fourth floor above the Café Serval, Rue de la Harpe. We will go to Dauriat's first of all. You still mean to go on, do you not? Very well, I will introduce you to one of the kings of the trade to-night, and to one or two journalists. We will sup with my mistress and several friends after the play, for you cannot count that dinner as a meal. Finot will be there, editor and proprietor of my paper. As Minette says in the Vaudeville (do you remember?), 'Time is a great lean creature.' Well, for the like of us, Chance is a great lean creature, and must be tempted."

"I shall remember this day as long as I live," said Lucien.

"Bring your manuscript with you, and be careful of your press, not on Florine's account, but for the booksellers' benefit."

The comrade's good nature, following upon the poet's passionate outcry, as he described the war of letters, moved Lucien quite as deeply as d'Arthez's grave and earnest words on a former occasion. The prospect of entering at once upon the strife with men warned him. In his youth and experience he had no suspicion how real were the moral ills denounced by the journalist. Nor did he know that he was standing at the parting of two distinct ways, between two systems, represented by the brotherhood upon one hand, and journalism upon the other. The first way was long, honorable, and sure; the second beset with hidden dangers, perilous path, among muddy channels where conscience is inevitably bespattered. The bent of Lucien's character deterred him for the shorter way, and the apparently pleasanter

way, and to snatch at the quickest and promptest means. At this moment he saw no difference between d'Arthez's noble friendship and Lousteau's easy camaraderie; his inconstant mind discerned a new weapon in journalism; he felt that he could wield it, so he wished to take it.

He was dazzled by the offers of this new friend, who had struck a hand in his in an easy way, which charmed Lucien. How should he know that while every man in the army of the press needs friends, every leader needs men. Lousteau, seeing that Lucien was resolute, enlisted him as a recruit, and hoped to attach him to himself. The relative positions of the two were similar—one hoped to become a corporal, the other to enter the ranks.

Lucien went back gayly to his lodgings. He was as careful over his toilet as on that former unlucky occasion when he occupied the Marquise d'Espard's box; but he had learned by this time how to wear his clothes with a better grace. They looked as though they belonged to him. He wore his best tightly-fitting, light-colored trousers, and a dress-coat. His boots, a very elegant pair adorned with tassels, had cost him forty francs. His thick, fine, golden hair was scented and crimped into bright, rippling curls. Self-confidence and belief in his future lighted up his forehead. He paid careful attention to his almost feminine hands, the filbert nails were a spotless rose pink, and the white contours of his chin were dazzling by contrast with a black satin stock. Never did a more beautiful youth come down from the hills of the Latin Quarter.

Glorious as a Greek god, Lucien took a cab, and reached the Café Serval at a quarter to seven. There the portress gave him some tolerably complicated directions for the ascent of four pair of stairs. Provided with these instructions, he discovered, not without difficulty, an open door at the end of a long, dark passage, and in another moment made the acquaintance of the traditional room of the Latin Quarter.

A young man's poverty follows him wherever he goes—into the Rue de la Harpe as into the Rue de Cluny, into d'Arthez's room, into Chrestien's lodging; yet everywhere no less the

poverty has its own peculiar characteristics, due to the idiosyncrasies of the sufferer. Poverty in this case wore a sinister look.

A shabby, cheap carpet lay in wrinkles at the foot of a curtainless walnut-wood bedstead; dingy curtains, begrimed with cigar smoke and fumes from a smoky chimney, hung in the windows; a Carcel lamp, Florine's gift, on the chimney-piece, had so far escaped the pawnbroker. Add a forlorn-looking chest of drawers, and a table littered with papers and disheveled quill pens, and the list of furniture is almost complete. All the books had evidently arrived in the course of the last twenty-four hours; and there was not a single object of any value in the room. In one corner you beheld a collection of crushed and flattened cigars, soiled pocket-handkerchiefs, shirts which had been turned to do double duty, and cravats that had reached a third edition; while a sordid array of old boots stood gaping in another angle of the room among aged socks worn into lace.

The room, in short, was a journalist's bivouac, filled with odds and ends of no value, and the most curiously bare apartment imaginable. A scarlet tinder-box glowed among a pile of books on the nightstand. A brace of pistols, a box of cigars, and a stray razor lay upon the mantel shelf; a pair of foils, crossed under a wire mask, hung against a panel. Three chairs and a couple of armchairs, scarcely fit for the shabbiest lodging-house in the street, completed the inventory.

The dirty, cheerless room told a tale of a restless life and a want of self-respect; someone came hither to sleep and work at high pressure, staying no longer than he could help, longing, while he remained, to be out and away. What a difference between this cynical disorder and d'Arthez's neat and self-respecting poverty! A warning came with the thought of d'Arthez; but Lucien would not heed it, for Étienne made a joking remark to cover the nakedness of a reckless life.

"This is my kennel; I appear in state in the Rue de Bondy, in the new apartments which our druggist has taken for Florine; we hold the house-warming this evening."

Étienne Lousteau wore black trousers and beautifully-varnished boots; his coat was buttoned up to the chin; he probably meant to change his linen at Florine's house, for his shirt collar was hidden by a velvet stock. He was trying to renovate his hat by an application of the brush.

"Let us go," said Lucien.

"Not yet. I am waiting for a bookseller to bring me some money; I have not a farthing; there will be play, perhaps, and in any case I must have gloves."

As he spoke, the two new friends heard a man's step in the passage outside.

"There he is," said Lousteau. "Now you will see, my dear fellow, the shape that Providence takes when he manifests himself to poets. You are going to behold Dauriat, the fashionable bookseller, in all his glory; but first you shall see the bookseller of the Quai des Augustins, the pawnbroker, the marine store dealer of the trade, the Norman ex-greengrocer.—Come along, old Tartar!" shouted Lousteau.

"Here am I," said a voice like a cracked bell.

"Brought the money with you?"

"Money? There is no money now in the trade," retorted the other, a young man who eyed Lucien curiously.

"*Imprimis*, you owe me fifty francs," Lousteau continued. "There are two copies of *Travels in Egypt* here, a marvel, so they say, swarming with woodcuts, sure to sell. Finot has been paid for two reviews that I am to write for him. *Item* two works, just out by Victor Ducange, a novelist highly thought of in the Marais. *Item* a couple of copies of a second work by Paul de Kock, a beginner in the same style. *Item* two copies of *Yseult of Dôle*, a charming provincial work. Total, one hundred francs net. Wherefore you owe me one hundred francs, my little Barbet."

Barbet made a close survey of edges and binding.

"Oh! they are in perfect condition," cried Lousteau. "The *Travels* are uncut, so is the Paul de Kock, so is the the Ducange, so is that other thing on the chimney-piece, *Considerations on Symbolism*. I will throw that in; myths weary me to that degree that I will let you have the thing to spare myself the sight of the swarms of mites coming out of it."

"But," asked Lucien, "how are you going to write your reviews?"

Barbet, in profound astonishment, stared at Lucien; then he looked at Étienne and chuckled.

"One can see that the gentleman has not the misfortune to be a literary man," said he.

"No, Barbet—no. He is a poet, a great poet; he is going to cut out Canalis, and Béranger, and Delavigne. He will go a long way if he does not throw himself into the river, and even so he will get as far as the drag-nets at Saint-Cloud."

"If I had any advice to give the gentleman," remarked Barbet, "it would be to give up poetry and take to prose. Poetry is not wanted on the Quais just now."

Barbet's shabby overcoat was fastened by a single button; his collar was greasy; he kept his hat on his head as he spoke; he wore low shoes, an open waistcoat gave glimpses of a homely shirt of coarse linen. Good nature was not wanting in the round countenance, with its two slits of covetous eyes; but there was likewise the vague uneasiness habitual to those who have money to spend and hear constant applications for it. Yet, to all appearance, he was plain-dealing and easy-natured, his business shrewdness was so well wadded round with fat. He had been an assistant until he took a wretched little shop on the Quai des Augustins two years since, and issued thence on his rounds among journalists, authors, and printers, buying up free copies cheaply, making in such ways some ten or twenty francs daily. Now, he had money saved; he knew instinctively where every man was pressed; he had a keen eye for business. If an author was in difficulties, he would discount a bill given by a publisher at fifteen or twenty per cent.; then the next day he would go to the publisher, haggle over the price of some work in demand, and pay him with his own bills instead of cash. Barbet was something of a scholar; he had had just enough education to make him careful to steer clear of modern poetry and modern romances. He had a liking for small speculations, for books of a popular kind which might be bought outright for a thousand francs and exploited at pleasure,

such as the *Child's History of France*, *Bookkeeping in Twenty Lessons*, and *Botany for Young Ladies*. Two or three times already he had allowed a good book to slip through his fingers; the authors had come and gone a score of times while he hesitated, and could not make up his mind to buy the manuscript. When reproached for his pusillanimity, he was wont to produce the account of a notorious trial taken from the newspapers; it cost him nothing, and had brought him in two or three thousand francs.

Barbet was the type of bookseller that goes in fear and trembling; lives on bread and walnuts; rarely puts his name to a bill; filches little profits on invoices; makes deductions, and hawks his books about himself; Heaven only knows where they go, but he sells them somehow, and gets paid for them. Barbet was the terror of printers, who could not tell what to make of him; he paid cash and took off the discount; he nibbled at their invoices whenever he thought they were pressed for money; and when he had fleeced a man once, he never went back to him—he feared to be caught in his turn.

“Well,” said Lousteau, “shall we go on with our business?”

“Eh! my boy,” returned Barbet in a familiar tone; “I have six thousand volumes of stock on hand at my place, and paper is not gold, as the old bookseller said. Trade is dull.”

“If you went into his shop, my dear Lucien,” said Étienne, turning to his friend, “you would see an oak counter from some bankrupt wine merchant’s sale, and a tallow dip, never snuffed for fear it should burn too quickly, making darkness visible. By that anomalous light you descry rows of empty shelves with some difficulty. An urchin in a blue blouse mounts guard over the emptiness, and blows his fingers, and shuffles his feet, and slaps his chest, like a cabman on the box. Just look about you! there are no more books there than I have here. Nobody could guess what kind of shop he keeps.”

“Here is a bill at three months for a hundred francs,” said Barbet, and he could not help smiling as he drew it



out of his pocket; "I will take your old books off your hands. I can't pay cash any longer, you see; sales are too slow. I thought that you would be wanting me; I had not a penny, and I made out a bill simply to oblige you, for I am not fond of giving my signature."

"So you want my thanks and esteem into the bargain, do you?"

"Bills are not met with sentiment," responded Barbet; "but I will accept your esteem, all the same."

"But I want gloves, and the perfumers will be base enough to decline your paper," said Lousteau. "Stop, there is a superb engraving in the top drawer in the chest there, worth eighty francs, proof before letters and after letter-press, for I have written a pretty droll article upon it. There was something to lay hold of in *Hippocrates Refusing the Presents of Artaxerxes*. A fine engraving, eh? Just the thing to suit all the doctors, who are refusing the extravagant gifts of Parisian satraps. You will find two or three dozen novels underneath it. Come, now, take the lot and give me forty francs."

"*Forty francs!*" exclaimed the bookseller, emitting a cry like the squall of a frightened fowl. "Twenty at the very most! And then I may never see the money again," he added.

"Where are your twenty francs?" asked Lousteau.

"My word, I don't know that I have them," said Barbet, fumbling in his pockets. "Here they are. You are plundering me; you have an ascendancy over me——"

"Come, let us be off," said Lousteau, and taking up Lucien's manuscript, he drew a line upon it in ink under the string.

"Have you anything else?" asked Barbet.

"Nothing, you young Shylock. I am going to put you in the way of a bit of very good business," Étienne continued ("in which you shall lose a thousand crowns, to teach you to rob me in this fashion"), he added for Lucien's ear.

"But how about your reviews?" said Lucien, as they rolled away to the Palais Royal.

"Pooh! you do not know how reviews are knocked off.

As for the *Travels in Egypt*, I looked into the book here and there (without cutting the pages), and I found eleven slips in grammar. I shall say that the writer may have mastered the dicky-bird language on the flints that they call 'obelisks' out there in Egypt, but he cannot write in his own, as I will prove to him in a column and a half. I shall say that instead of giving us natural history and archæology, he ought to have interested himself in the future of Egypt, in the progress of civilization, and the best method of strengthening the bond between Egypt and France. France has won and lost Egypt, but she may yet attach the country to her interests by gaining a moral ascendancy over it. Then some patriotic penny-a-lining, interlarded with diatribes on Marseilles, the Levant, and our trade."

"But suppose that he had taken that view, what would you do?"

"Oh, well, I should say that instead of boring us with politics, he should have written about art, and described the picturesque aspects of the country and the local color. Then the critic bewails himself. Politics are intruded everywhere; we are weary of politics—politics on all sides. I should regret those charming books of travel that dwelt upon the difficulties of navigation, the fascination of steering between two rocks, the delights of crossing the line, and all the things that those who never will travel ought to know. Mingle this approval with scoffing at the travelers who hail the appearance of a bird or a flying-fish as a great event, who dilate upon fishing, and make transcripts from the log. Where, you ask, is that perfectly unintelligible scientific information, fascinating, like all that is profound, mysterious, and incomprehensible. The reader laughs, that is all that he wants. As for novels, Florine is the greatest novel reader alive; she gives me a synopsis, and I take her opinion and put a review together. When a novelist bores her with 'author's stuff,' as she calls it, I treat the work respectfully, and ask the publisher for another copy, which he sends forthwith, delighted to have a favorable review."

"Goodness! and what of criticism, the critic's sacred

office?" cried Lucien, remembering the ideas instilled into him by the brotherhood.

"My dear fellow," said Lousteau, "criticism is a kind of brush which must not be used upon flimsy stuff, or it carries it all away with it. That is enough of the craft, now listen! Do you see that mark?" he continued, pointing to the manuscript of the *Marguerites*. "I have put ink on the string and paper. If Dauriat reads your manuscript, he certainly could not tie the string and leave it just as it was before. So your book is sealed, so to speak. This is not useless to you for the experiment that you propose to make. And another thing: please to observe that you are not arriving quite alone and without a sponsor in the place, like the youngsters who make the round of half-a-score of publishers before they find one that will offer them a chair."

Lucien's experience confirmed the truth of this particular. Lousteau paid the cabman, giving him three francs—a piece of prodigality following upon such impecuniosity astonishing Lucien more than a little. Then the two friends entered the Wooden Galleries, where fashionable literature, as it is called, used to reign in state.

## PART II

THE Wooden Galleries of the Palais Royal used to be one of the most famous sights in Paris. Some description of the squalid bazaar will not be out of place; for there are few men of forty who will not take an interest in recollections of a state of things which will seem incredible to a younger generation.

The great dreary, spacious Galerie d'Orléans, that flowerless hothouse, as yet was not; the space upon which it now stands was covered with booths; or, to be more precise, with small, wooden dens, pervious to the weather, and dimly illuminated on the side of the court and the garden by borrowed lights styled windows by courtesy, but more like the filthiest arrangements for obscuring daylight to be found in little wineshops in the suburbs.

The Galleries, parallel passages about twelve feet in height, were formed by a triple row of shops. The center row, giving back and front upon the Galleries, was filled with the fetid atmosphere of the place, and derived a dubious daylight through the invariably dirty windows of the roof; but so thronged were these hives, that rents were excessively high, and as much as a thousand crowns was paid for a space scarce six feet by eight. The outer rows gave respectively upon the garden and the court, and were covered on that side by a slight trellis-work painted green, to protect the crazy plastered walls from continual friction with the passers-by. In a few square feet of earth at the back of the shops, strange freaks of vegetable life unknown to science grew amid the products of various no less flourishing industries. You beheld a rosebush capped with printed paper in such a sort that the flowers of rhetoric were perfumed by the cankered blossoms of that ill-kept, ill-smelling garden. Handbills and ribbon streamers of every hue flaunted gayly among the leaves; natural flowers competed unsuccessfully for an existence with odds and ends of millinery. You discovered

a knot of ribbon adorning a green tuft; the dahlia admired afar proved on a nearer view to be a satin rosette.

The Palais seen from the court or from the garden was a fantastic sight, a grotesque combination of walls of plaster patchwork which had once been whitewashed, of blistered paint, heterogeneous placards, and all the most unaccountable freaks of Parisian squalor; the green trellises were prodigiously the dingier for constant contact with a Parisian public. So, upon either side, the fetid, disreputable approaches might have been there for the express purpose of warning away fastidious people; but fastidious folk no more recoiled before these horrors than the prince in the fairy stories turns tail at sight of the dragon or of the other obstacles put between him and the princess by the wicked fairy.

There was a passage through the center of the Galleries then as now; and, as at the present day, you entered them through the two peristyles begun before the Revolution, and left unfinished for lack of funds; but in place of the handsome modern arcade leading to the Théâtre-Français, you passed along a narrow, disproportionately lofty passage, so ill-roofed that the rain came through on wet days. All the roofs of the hovels indeed were in very bad repair, and covered here and again with a double thickness of tarpaulin. A famous silk mercer once brought an action against the Orleans family for damages done in the course of a night to his stock of shawls and stuffs, and gained the day and a considerable sum. It was in this last-named passage, called "The Glass Gallery" to distinguish it from the Wooden Galleries, that Chevet laid the foundations of his fortunes.

Here, in the Palais, you trod the natural soil of Paris, augmented by importations brought in upon the boots of foot passengers; here, at all seasons, you stumbled among hills and hollows of dried mud swept daily by the shopman's besom, and only after some practice could you walk at your ease. The treacherous mud heaps, the window-panes incrustated with deposits of dust and rain, the mean looking hovels covered with ragged placards, the grimy unfinished walls, the general air of a compromise between a gipsy camp,

the booths of a country fair, and the temporary structures which we in Paris build round about public monuments that remain unbuilt; the grotesque aspect of the mart as a whole was in keeping with the seething traffic of various kinds carried on within it; for here in this shameless, unblushing haunt, amid wild mirth and a babel of talk, an immense amount of business was transacted between the Revolution of 1789 and the Revolution of 1830.

For twenty years the Bourse stood just opposite, on the ground floor of the Palais. Public opinion was manufactured, and reputations made and ruined here, just as political jobs were arranged. People made appointments to meet in the Galleries before or after 'Change; on showery days the Palais Royal was often crowded with weather-bound capitalists and men of business. The structure which had grown up, no one knew how, about this point was strangely resonant, laughter was multiplied; if two men quarreled, the whole place rang from one end to the other with the dispute. In the daytime milliners and booksellers enjoyed a monopoly of the place; towards nightfall it was filled with women of the town. Here dwelt poetry, politics, and prose, new books and classics, the glories of ancient and modern literature side by side with political intrigue and the tricks of the bookseller's trade. Here all the very latest and newest literature were sold to a public which resolutely declined to buy elsewhere. Sometimes several thousand copies of such and such a pamphlet by Paul-Louis Courier would be sold in a single evening; and people crowded thither to buy *Les Aventures de la Fille d'un Roi*—that first shot fired by the Orleanists at The Charter promulgated by Louis XVIII.

When Lucien made his first appearance in the Wooden Galleries, some few of the shops boasted proper fronts and handsome windows, but these in every case looked upon the court or the garden. As for the center row, until the day when the whole strange colony perished under the hammer of Fontaine the architect, every shop was open back and front like a booth in a country fair, so that from within you could look out upon either side through gaps among the goods displayed or through the glass doors. As it was

obviously impossible to kindle a fire, the tradesmen were fain to use charcoal chafing-dishes, and formed a sort of brigade for the prevention of fires among themselves; and, indeed, a little carelessness might have set the whole quarter blazing in fifteen minutes, for the plank-built republic, dried by the heat of the sun, and haunted by too inflammable human material, was bedizened with muslin and paper and gauze, and ventilated at times by a thorough draught.

The milliners' windows were full of impossible hats and bonnets, displayed apparently for advertisement rather than for sale, each on a separate iron spit with a knob at the top. The galleries were decked out in all the colors of the rainbow. On what heads would those dusty bonnets end their careers?—for a score of years the problem had puzzled frequenters of the Palais. Saleswomen, usually plain-featured, but vivacious, waylaid the feminine foot passenger with cunning importunities, after the fashion of market-women, and using much the same language; a shop-girl, who made free use of her eyes and tongue, sat outside on a stool and harangued the public with "Buy a pretty bonnet, madame?"—"Do let me sell you something!"—varying a rich and picturesque vocabulary with inflections of the voice, with glances, and remarks upon the passers-by. Booksellers and milliners lived on terms of mutual good understanding.

But it was in the passage known by the pompous title of the "Glass Gallery" that the oddest trades were carried on. Here were ventriloquists and charlatans of every sort, and sights of every description, from the kind where there is nothing to see to panoramas of the globe. One man who has since made seven or eight hundred thousand francs by traveling from fair to fair began here by hanging out a signboard, a revolving sun in a blackboard, and the inscription in red letters—"Here Man may see what God can never see. Admittance, two sous." The showman at the door never admitted one person alone, nor more than two at a time. Once inside, you confronted a great looking-glass; and a voice, which might have terrified Hoffmann of Berlin, suddenly spoke as if some spring had been touched, "You see here, gentlemen, something that God can never

see through all eternity, that is to say, your like. God has not His like." And out you went, too shamefaced to confess to your stupidity.

Voices issued from every narrow doorway, crying up the merits of Cosmoramas, views of Constantinople, marionettes, automatic chess-players, and performing dogs who would pick you out the prettiest woman in the company. The ventriloquist Fitz-James flourished here in the Café Borel before he went to fight and fall at Montmartre with the young lads from the École polytechnique. Here, too, there were fruit and flower shops, and a famous tailor whose gold-laced uniforms shone like the sun when the shops were lighted at night.

Of a morning the galleries were empty, dark, and deserted; the shopkeepers chatted among themselves. Towards two o'clock in the afternoon the Palais began to fill; at three, men came in from the Bourse, and Paris, generally speaking, crowded the place. Impecunious youth, hungering after literature, took the opportunity of turning over the pages of the books exposed for sale on the stalls outside the booksellers' shops; the men in charge charitably allowed a poor student to pursue his course of free studies; and in this way a duodecimo volume of some two hundred pages, such as *Smarra* or *Pierre Schlemihl*, or *Jean Sbogar* or *Jocko*, might be devoured in a couple of afternoons. There was something very French in this alms given to the young, hungry, starved intellect. Circulating libraries were not as yet; if you wished to read a book, you were obliged to buy it, for which reason novels of the early part of the century were sold in numbers which now seem well-nigh fabulous to us.

But the poetry of this terrible mart appeared in all its splendor at the close of the day. Women of the town, flocking in and out from the neighboring streets, were allowed to make a promenade of the Wooden Galleries. Thither came prostitutes from every quarter of Paris to "do the Palais." The Stone Galleries belonged to privileged houses, which paid for the right of exposing women dressed like princesses under such and such an arch, or in the corresponding space of garden; but the Wooden Galleries were the



common ground of women of the streets. This was *the Palais*, a word which used to signify the temple of prostitution. A woman might come and go, taking away her prey whithersoever seemed good to her. So great was the crowd attracted thither at night by the women, that it was impossible to move except at a slow pace, as in a procession or at a masked ball. Nobody objected to the slowness; it facilitated examination. The women dressed in a way that is never seen nowadays. The bodices cut extremely low both back and front; the fantastical head-dresses, designed to attract notice; here a cap from the Pays du Caux, and there a Spanish mantilla; the hair crimped and curled like a poodle's, or smoothed down in bandeaux over the forehead; the close-fitting white stockings and limbs, revealed it would not be easy to say how, but always at the right moment—all this poetry of vice has fled. The license of question and reply, the public cynicism in keeping with the haunt, is now unknown even at masquerades or the famous public balls. It was an appalling, gay scene. The dazzling white flesh of the women's necks and shoulders stood out in magnificent contrast against the men's almost invariably somber costumes. The murmur of voices, the hum of the crowd, could be heard even in the middle of the garden as a sort of droning bass, interspersed with *fioriture* of shrill laughter or clamor of some rare dispute. You saw gentlemen and celebrities cheek by jowl with gallows-birds. There was something indescribably piquant about the anomalous assemblage; the most insensible of men felt its charm, so much so, that, until the very last moment, Paris came hither to walk up and down on the wooden planks laid over the cellars where men were at work on the new buildings; and when the squalid wooden erections were finally taken down, great and unanimous regret was felt.

Ladvoat the bookseller had opened a shop but a few days since in the angle formed by the central passage which crossed the galleries; and immediately opposite another bookseller, now forgotten, Dauriat, a bold and youthful pioneer, who opened up the paths in which his rival was to shine. Dauriat's shop stood in the row which gave upon the garden;

Ladvocat's, on the opposite side, looked out upon the court. Dauriat's establishment was divided into two parts; his shop was simply a great trade warehouse, and the second room was his private office.

Lucien, on this first visit to the Wooden Galleries, was bewildered by a sight which no novice can resist. He soon lost the guide who befriended him.

"If you were as good-looking as yonder young fellow, I would give you your money's worth," a woman said, pointing out Lucien to an old man.

Lucien slunk through the crowd like a blind man's dog, following the stream in a state of stupefaction and excitement difficult to describe. Importuned by glances and white-rounded contours, dazzled by the audacious display of bared throat and bosom, he gripped his roll of manuscript tightly lest somebody should steal it—innocent that he was!

"Well, what is it, sir!" he exclaimed, thinking, when someone caught him by the arm, that his poetry had proved too great a temptation for some author's honesty, and turning, he recognized Lousteau.

"I felt sure that you would find your way here at last," said his friend.

The poet was standing in the doorway of a shop crowded with persons waiting for an audience with the sultan of the publishing trade. Printers, paper-dealers, and designers were catechizing Dauriat's assistants as to present or future business.

Lousteau drew Lucien into the shop. "There! that is Finot, who edits my paper," he said; "he is talking with Félicien Vernou, who has abilities, but the little wretch is as dangerous as a hidden disease."

"Well, old boy, there is a first night for you," said Finot, coming up with Vernou. "I have disposed of the box."

"Sold it to Braulard?"

"Well, and if I did, what then? You will get a seat. What do you want with Dauriat? Oh, it is agreed that we are to push Paul de Kock, Dauriat has taken two hundred copies, and Victor Ducange is refusing to give him his

next. Dauriat wants to set up another man in the same line, he says. You must rate Paul de Kock above Ducange."

"But I have a piece on with Ducange at the Gaîté," said Lousteau.

"Very well, tell him that I wrote the article. It can be supposed that I wrote a slashing review, and you toned it down; and he will owe you thanks."

"Couldn't you get Dauriat's cashier to discount this bit of a bill for a hundred francs?" asked Etienne Lousteau. "We are celebrating Florine's house-warming with a supper to-night, you know."

"Ah! yes, you are treating us all," said Finot with an apparent effort of memory. "Here, Gabusson," he added, handing Barbet's bill to the cashier, "let me have ninety francs for this individual.—Fill in your name, old man."

Lousteau signed his name while the cashier counted out the money; and Lucien, all eyes and ears, lost not a syllable of the conversation.

"That is not all, my friend," Etienne continued; "I don't thank you, we have sworn an eternal friendship. I have taken it upon myself to introduce this gentleman to Dauriat, and you must incline his ear to listen to us."

"What is on foot?" asked Finot.

"A volume of poetry," said Lucien.

"Oh!" said Finot, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Your acquaintance cannot have had much to do with publishers, or he would have hidden his manuscript in the loneliest spot in his dwelling," remarked Vernou, looking at Lucien as he spoke.

Just at that moment a good-looking young man came into the shop, gave a hand to Finot and Lousteau, and nodded slightly to Vernou. The newcomer was Émile Blondet, who had made his first appearance in the *Journal des Débats*, with articles revealing capacities of the very highest order.

"Come and have supper with us at midnight, at Florine's," said Lousteau.

"Very good," said the newcomer. "But who is going to be there?"

"Oh, Florine and Matifat the druggist," said Lousteau, "and du Bruel, the author who gave Florine the part in which she is to make her first appearance, a little old foggy named Cardot, and his son-in-law Camusot, and Finot, and——"

"Does your druggist do things properly?"

"He will not give us doctored wine," said Lucien.

"You are very witty, monsieur," Blondet returned gravely.

"Is he coming, Lousteau?"

"Yes."

"Then we shall have some fun."

Lucien had flushed red to the tips of his ears. Blondet tapped on the window above Dauriat's desk.

"Is your business likely to keep you long, Dauriat?"

"I am at your service, my friend."

"That's right," said Lousteau, addressing his protégé. "That young fellow is hardly any older than you are, and he is on the *Débats*! He is one of the princes of criticism. They are afraid of him, Dauriat will fawn upon him, and then we can put in a word about our business with the pasha of vignettes and type. Otherwise we might have waited till eleven o'clock, and our turn would not have come. The crowd of people waiting to speak with Dauriat is growing bigger every moment."

Lucien and Lousteau followed Blondet, Finot, and Vernou, and stood in a knot at the back of the shop.

"What is he doing?" asked Blondet of the head clerk, who rose to bid him good-evening.

"He is buying a weekly newspaper. He wants to put new life into it, and set up a rival to the *Minerve* and the *Conservateur*; Eymery has rather too much of his own way in the *Minerve*, and the *Conservateur* is too blindly Romantic."

"Is he going to pay well?"

"Only too much—as usual," said the cashier.

Just as he spoke another young man entered; this was the writer of a magnificent novel which had sold very rapidly and met with the greatest possible success. Dauriat was bringing out a second edition. The appearance of this odd

and extraordinary looking being, so unmistakably an artist, made a deep impression on Lucien's mind.

"That is Nathan," Lousteau said in his ear.

Nathan, then in the prime of his youth, came up to the group of journalists, hat in hand; and in spite of his look of fierce pride he was almost humble to Blondet, whom as yet he only knew by sight. Blondet did not remove his hat, neither did Finot.

"Monsieur, I am delighted to avail myself of an opportunity yielded by chance——"

("He is so nervous that he is committing a pleonasm," said Félicien in an aside to Lousteau.)

"——to give expression to my gratitude for the splendid review which you were so good as to give me in the *Journal des Débats*. Half the success of my book is owing to you."

"No, my dear fellow, no," said Blondet, with an air of patronage scarcely masked by good nature. "You have talent, the deuce you have, and I'm delighted to make your acquaintance."

"Now that your review has appeared, I shall not seem to be courting power; we can feel at ease. Will you do me the honor and the pleasure of dining with me to-morrow? Finot is coming.—Lousteau, old man, you will not refuse me, will you?" added Nathan, shaking Étienne by the hand. —"Ah, you are on the way to a great future, monsieur," he added, turning again to Blondet; "you will carry on the line of Dussaults, Fiévées, and Geoffrois! Hoffmann was talking about you to a friend of mine, Claude Vignon, his pupil; he said that he could die in peace, the *Journal des Débats* would live forever. They ought to pay you tremendously well."

"A hundred francs a column," said Blondet. "Poor pay when one is obliged to read the books, and read a hundred before you find one worth interesting yourself in, like yours. Your work gave me pleasure, upon my word."

"And brought him in fifteen hundred francs," said Lousteau for Lucien's benefit.

"But you write political articles, don't you?" asked Nathan.

"Yes; now and again."

Lucien felt like an embryo among these men; he had admired Nathan's book, he had revered the author as an immortal; Nathan's abject attitude before this critic, whose name and importance were both unknown to him, stupefied Lucien.

"How if I should come to behave as he does?" he thought. "Is a man obliged to part with his self-respect?—Pray put on your hat again, Nathan; you have written a great book, and the critic has only written a review of it."

These thoughts set the blood tingling in his veins. Scarce a minute passed but some young author, poverty-stricken and shy, came in, asked to speak with Dauriat, looked round the crowded shop despairingly, and went out saying, "I will come back again." Two or three politicians were chatting over the convocation of the Chambers and public business with a group of well-known public men. The weekly newspaper for which Dauriat was in treaty was licensed to treat of matters political, and the number of newspapers suffered to exist was growing smaller and smaller, till a paper was a piece of property as much in demand as a theater. One of the largest shareholders in the *Constitutionnel* was standing in the midst of the knot of political celebrities. Lousteau performed the part of cicerone to admiration; with every sentence he uttered Dauriat rose higher in Lucien's opinion. Politics and literature seemed to converge in Dauriat's shop. He had seen a great poet prostituting his muse to journalism, humiliating Art, as woman was humiliated and prostituted in those shameless galleries without, and the provincial took a terrible lesson to heart. Money! That was the key to every enigma. Lucien realized the fact that he was unknown and alone, and that the fragile clew of an uncertain friendship was his sole guide to success and fortune. He blamed the kind and loyal little circle for painting the world for him in false colors, for preventing him from plunging into the arena, pen in hand. "I should be a Blondet at this moment!" he exclaimed within himself.

Only a little while ago they had sat looking out over Paris from the Gardens of the Luxembourg, and Lousteau had

uttered the cry of a wounded eagle; then Lousteau had been a great man in Lucien's eyes, and now he had shrunk to scarce visible proportions. The really important man for him at this moment was the fashionable bookseller, by whom all these men lived; and the poet, manuscript in hand, felt a nervous tremor that was almost like fear. He noticed a group of busts mounted on wooden pedestals, painted to resemble marble; Byron stood there, and Goethe and M. de Canalis. Dauriat was hoping to publish a volume by the last-named poet, who might see, on his entrance into the shop, the estimation in which he was held by the trade. Unconsciously Lucien's own self-esteem began to shrink, and his courage ebbed. He began to see how large a part this Dauriat would play in his destinies, and waited impatiently for him to appear.

"Well, children," said a voice, and a short, stout man appeared, with a puffy face that suggested a Roman proconsul's visage, mellowed by an air of good nature which deceived superficial observers. "Well, children, here am I, the proprietor of the only weekly paper in the market, a paper with two thousand subscribers!"

"Old joker! The registered number is seven hundred, and that is over the mark," said Blondet.

"Twelve hundred, on my most sacred word of honor.—I said two thousand for the benefit of the printers and paper-dealers yonder," he added, lowering his voice, then raising it again. "I thought you had more tact, my boy," he added.

"Are you going to take any partners?" inquired Finot.

"That depends," said Dauriat. "Will you take a third at forty thousand francs?"

"It's a bargain, if you will take Émile Blondet here on the staff, and Claude Vignon, Scribe, Théodore Leclercq, Félicien Vernou, Jay, Jouy, Lousteau, and——"

"And why not Lucien de Rubempré?" the provincial poet put in boldly.

"——and Nathan," concluded Finot.

"Why not the people out there in the street?" asked Dauriat, scowling at the author of the *Marguerites*.—"To

whom have I the honor of speaking?" he added, with an insolent glance.

"One moment, Dauriat," said Lousteau. "I have brought this gentleman to you. Listen to me, while Finot is thinking over your proposals."

Lucien watched this Dauriat, who addressed Finot with the familiar *tu*, which even Finot did not permit himself to use in reply; who called the redoubtable Blondet "my boy," and extended a hand royally to Nathan with a friendly nod. The provincial poet felt his shirt wet with perspiration when the formidable sultan looked indifferent and ill-pleased.

"Another piece of business, my boy!" exclaimed Dauriat. "Why, I have eleven hundred manuscripts on hand, as you know! Yes, gentlemen, I have eleven hundred manuscripts submitted to me at this moment; ask Gabusson. I shall soon be obliged to start a department to keep account of the stock of manuscripts, and a special office for reading them, and a committee to vote on their merits, with numbered counters for those who attend, and a permanent secretary to draw up the minutes for me. It will be a kind of local branch of the Académie, and the Académiciens will be better paid in the Wooden Galleries than at the Institut."

"'Tis an idea," said Blondet.

"A bad idea," returned Dauriat. "It is not my business to take stock of the lucubrations of those among you who take to literature because they cannot be capitalists, and there is no opening for them as bootmakers, nor corporals, nor domestic servants, nor officials, nor bailiffs. Nobody comes here until he has made a name for himself! Make a name for yourself, and you will find gold in torrents. I have made three great men in the last two years; and lo and behold three examples of ingratitude! Here is Nathan talking of six thousand francs for the second edition of his book, which cost me three thousand francs in reviews, and has not brought in a thousand yet. I paid a thousand francs for Blondet's two articles, besides a dinner, which cost me five hundred——"

"But if all booksellers talked as you do, sir, how could



a man publish his first book at all?" asked Lucien. Blondet had gone down tremendously in his opinion since he had heard the amount given by Dauriat for the articles in the *Débats*.

"That is not my affair," said Dauriat, looking daggers at this handsome young fellow, who was smiling pleasantly at him. "I do not publish books for amusement, nor risk two thousand francs for the sake of seeing my money back again. I speculate in literature, and publish forty volumes of ten thousand copies each, just as Panckouke does and the Baudoins. With my influence and the articles which I secure, I can push a business of a hundred thousand crowns, instead of a single volume involving a couple of thousand francs. It is just as much trouble to bring out a new name and to induce the public to take up an author and his book, as to make a success with the *Théâtres Étrangers*, *Victoires et Conquêtes*, or *Mémoires sur la Révolution*, books that bring in a fortune. I am not here as a stepping-stone to future fame, but to make money, and to find it for men with distinguished names. The manuscripts for which I give a hundred thousand francs pay me better than work by an unknown author who asks six hundred. If I am not exactly a Mæcenas, I deserve the gratitude of literature; I have doubled the prices of manuscripts. I am giving you this explanation because you are a friend of Lousteau's, my boy," added Dauriat, clapping Lucien on the shoulder with odious familiarity. "If I were to talk to all the authors who have a mind that I should be their publisher, I should have to shut up shop; I should pass my time very agreeably no doubt, but the conversations would cost too much. I am not rich enough yet to listen to all the monologues of self-conceit. Nobody does, except in classical tragedies on the stage."

The terrible Dauriat's gorgeous raiment seemed in the provincial poet's eyes to add force to the man's remorseless logic.

"What is it about?" he continued, addressing Lucien's protector.

"It is a volume of magnificent poetry."

At that word, Dauriat turned to Gabusson with a gesture worthy of Talma.

"Gabusson, my friend," he said, "from this day forward, when anybody begins to talk of works in manuscript here.—Do you hear that, all of you?" he broke in upon himself; and three assistants at once emerged from among the piles of books at the sound of their employer's wrathful voice. "If anybody comes here with manuscripts," he continued, looking at the fingernails of a well-kept hand, "ask him whether it is poetry or prose; and if he says poetry, show him the door at once. Verses mean reverses in the book-trade."

"Bravo! well put, Dauriat," cried the chorus of journalists.

"It is true!" cried the bookseller, striding about his shop with Lucien's manuscript in his hand. "You have no idea, gentlemen, of the amount of harm that Byron, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Casimir Delavigne, Canalis, and Béranger have done by their success. The fame of them has brought down an invasion of barbarians upon us. I know *this*; there are a thousand volumes of manuscript poetry going the round of the publishers at this moment, things that nobody can make head nor tail of, stories in verse that begin in the middle like *The Corsair* and *Lara*. They set up to be original, forsooth, and indulge in stanzas that nobody can understand, and descriptive poetry after the pattern of the younger men who discovered Delille, and imagine that they are doing something new. Poets have been swarming like cockchafers for two years past. I have lost twenty thousand francs through poetry in the last twelvemonth. You ask Gabusson! There may be immortal poets somewhere in the world; I know of some that are blooming and rosy, and have no beards on their chins as yet," he continued, looking at Lucien; "but in the trade, young man, there are only four poets—Béranger, Casimir Delavigne, Lamartine, and Victor Hugo; as for Canalis—he is a poet made by sheer force of writing him up."

Lucien felt that he lacked the courage to hold up his head and show his spirit before all these influential persons,

who were laughing with all their might. He knew very well that he should look hopelessly ridiculous, and yet he felt consumed by a fierce desire to catch the bookseller by the throat, to ruffle the insolent composure of his cravat, to break the gold chain that glittered on the man's chest, trample his watch under his feet, and tear him in pieces. Mortified vanity opened the door to thoughts of vengeance, and inwardly he swore eternal enmity to that bookseller. But he smiled amiably.

"Poetry is like the sun," said Blondet, "giving life alike to primeval forests and to ants and gnats and mosquitoes. There is no virtue but has a vice to match, and literature breeds the publisher."

"And the journalist," said Lousteau.

Dauriat burst out laughing.

"What is this after all?" he asked, holding up the manuscript.

"A volume of sonnets that will put Petrarch to the blush," said Lousteau.

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say," answered Lousteau, seeing the knowing smile that went round the group. Lucien could not take offense, but he chafed inwardly.

"Very well, I will read them," said Dauriat, with a regal gesture that marked the full extent of the concession. "If these sonnets of yours are up to the level of the nineteenth century, I will make a great poet of you, my boy."

"If he has brains to equal his good looks, you will run no great risks," remarked one of the great public speakers of the day, a deputy who was chatting with the editor of the *Minerve*, and a writer for the *Constitutionnel*.

"Fame means twelve thousand francs in reviews, and a thousand more for dinners, General," said Dauriat. "If M. Benjamin de Constant means to write a paper on this young poet, it will not be long before I make a bargain with him."

At the title of General, and the distinguished name of Benjamin Constant, the bookseller's shop took the proportions of Olympus for the provincial great man.

"Lousteau, I want a word with you," said Finot; "but I shall see you again later, at the theater.—Dauriat, I will take your offer, but on conditions. Let us step into your office."

"Come in, my boy," answered Dauriat, allowing Finot to pass before him. Then, intimating to some ten persons still waiting for him that he was engaged, he likewise was about to disappear when Lucien impatiently stopped him.

"You are keeping my manuscript. When shall I have an answer?"

"Oh, come back in three or four days, my little poet, and we will see."

Lousteau hurried Lucien away; he had not time to take leave of Vernou and Blondet and Raoul Nathan, nor to salute General Foy nor Benjamin Constant, whose book on the Hundred Days was just about to appear. Lucien scarcely caught a glimpse of fair hair, a refined oval-shaped face, keen eyes, and the pleasant-looking mouth belonging to the man who had played the part of a Potemkin to Mme. de Staël for twenty years, and now was at war with the Bourbons, as he had been at war with Napoleon. He was destined to win his cause and to die stricken to earth by his victory.

"What a shop!" exclaimed Lucien, as he took his place in the cab beside Lousteau.

"To the Panorama-Dramatique; look sharp, and you shall have thirty sous," Étienne Lousteau called to the cabman.—"Dauriat is a rascal who sells books to the amount of fifteen or sixteen hundred thousand francs every year. He is a kind of Minister of Literature," Lousteau continued. His self-conceit had been pleasantly tickled, and he was showing off before Lucien. "Dauriat is just as grasping as Barbet, but it is on a wholesale scale. Dauriat can be civil, and he is generous, but he has a great opinion of himself; as for his wit, it consists in a faculty for picking up all that he hears, and his shop is a capital place to frequent. You meet all the best men at Dauriat's. A young fellow learns more there in an hour than by poring over books for half a score of years. People talk over articles and

concoct subjects; you make the acquaintance of great or influential people who may be useful to you. You must know people if you mean to get on nowadays.—It is all luck, you see. And as for sitting by yourself in a corner alone with your intellect, it is the most dangerous thing of all.”

“But what insolence!” said Lucien.

“Pshaw! we all of us laugh at Dauriat,” said Étienne. “If you are in need of him, he tramples upon you; if he has need of the *Journal des Débats*, Émile Blondet sets him spinning like a top. Oh, if you take to literature, you will see a good many queer things. Well, what was I telling you, eh?”

“Yes, you were right,” said Lucien. “My experience in that shop was even more painful than I expected, after your programme.”

“Why do you choose to suffer? You find your subject, you wear out your wits over it with toiling at night, you throw your very life into it; and after all your journeyings in the fields of thought, the monument reared with your life-blood is simply a good or a bad speculation for a publisher. Your work will sell or it will not sell; and therein, for them, lies the whole question. A book means so much to risk, and the better the book, the less likely it is to sell. A man of talent rises above the level of ordinary heads; his success varies in direct ratio with the time required for his work to be appreciated. And no publisher wants to wait. To-day’s book must be sold by to-morrow. Acting on this system, publishers and booksellers do not care to take real literature, books that call for the high praise that comes slowly.”

“D’Arthez was right,” exclaimed Lucien.

“Do you know d’Arthez?” asked Lousteau. “I know of no more dangerous company than solitary spirits like that fellow yonder, who fancy that they can draw the world after them. All of us begin by thinking that we are capable of great things; and when once a youthful imagination is heated by this superstition, the candidate for posthumous honors makes no attempt to move the world while such moving of the world is both possible and profitable; he lets the time

go by. I am for Mahomet's system—if the mountain does not come to me, I am for going to the mountain."

The common-sense so trenchantly put in this sally left Lucien halting between the resignation preached by the brotherhood and Lousteau's militant doctrine. He said not a word till they reached the Boulevard du Temple.

The Panorama-Dramatique no longer exists. A dwelling-house stands on the site of the once charming theater in the Boulevard du Temple, where two successive managements collapsed without making a single hit; and yet Vignol, who has since fallen heir to some of Potier's popularity, made his début there; and Florine, five years later a celebrated actress, made her first appearance in the theater opposite the Rue Charlot. Playhouses, like men, have their vicissitudes. The Panorama-Dramatique suffered from competition. The machinations of its rivals, the Ambigu, the Gaîté, the Porte Saint-Martin, and the Vaudeville, together with a plethora of restrictions and a scarcity of good plays, combined to bring about the downfall of the house. No dramatic author cared to quarrel with a prosperous theater for the sake of the Panorama-Dramatique, whose existence was, to say the least, problematical. The management at this moment, however, was counting on the success of a new melodramatic comedy by M. du Bruel, a young author who, after working in collaboration with divers celebrities, had now produced a piece professedly entirely his own. It had been specially composed for the leading lady, a young actress who began her stage career as a supernumerary at the Gaîté, and had been promoted to small parts for the last twelvemonth. But though Mlle. Florine's acting had attracted some attention, she obtained no engagement, and the Panorama accordingly had carried her off. Coralie, another actress, was to make her début at the same time.

Lucien was amazed at the power wielded by the press. "This gentleman is with me," said Étienne Lousteau, and the box-office clerks bowed before him as one man.

"You will find it no easy matter to get seats," said the head clerk. "There is nothing left now but the stage box."

A certain amount of time was wasted in controversies with the box-keepers in the lobbies, when Etienne said, "Let us go behind the scenes; we will speak to the manager, he will take us into the stage-box; and besides, I will introduce you to Florine, the heroine of the evening."

At a sign from Étienne Lousteau, the doorkeeper of the orchestra took out a little key and unlocked a door in the thickness of the wall. Lucien, following his friend, went suddenly out of the lighted corridor into the black darkness of the passage between the house and the wings. A short flight of damp steps surmounted, one of the strangest of all spectacles opened out before the provincial poet's eyes. The height of the roof, the slenderness of the props, the ladders hung with Argand lamps, the atrocious ugliness of scenery beheld at close quarters, the thick paint on the actors' faces, and their outlandish costumes, made of such coarse materials, the stage carpenters in greasy jackets, the firemen, the stage manager strutting about with his hat on his head, the supernumeraries sitting among the hanging back-scenes, the ropes and pulleys, the heterogeneous collection of absurdities, shabby, dirty, hideous, and gaudy, was something so altogether different from the stage seen over the footlights, that Lucien's astonishment knew no bounds. The curtain was just about to fall on a good old-fashioned melodrama entitled *Bertram*, a play adapted from a tragedy by Maturin which Charles Nodier, together with Byron and Sir Walter Scott, held in the highest esteem, though the play was a failure on the stage in Paris.

"Keep a tight hold of my arm, unless you have a mind to fall through a trap-door, or bring down a forest on your head; you will pull down a palace, or carry off a cottage, if you are not careful," said Etienne.—"Is Florine in her dressing-room, my pet?" he added, addressing an actress who stood waiting for her cue.

"Yes, love. Thank you for the things you said about me. You are much nicer since Florine has come here."

"Come, don't spoil your entry, little one. Quick with you, look sharp, and say, 'Stop, wretched man!' nicely, for there are two thousand francs of takings."

Lucien was struck with amazement when the girl's whole face suddenly changed, and she shrieked, "Stop, wretched man!" a cry that froze the blood in your veins. She was no longer the same creature.

"So this is the stage," he said to Lousteau.

"It is like the bookseller's shop in the Wooden Galleries, or a literary paper," said Étienne Lousteau; "it is a kitchen, neither more nor less."

Nathan appeared at this moment.

"What brings you here?" inquired Lousteau.

"Why, I am doing the minor theaters for the *Gazette* until something better turns up."

"Oh! come to supper with us this evening; speak well of Florine, and I will do as much for you."

"Very much at your service," returned Nathan.

"You know; she is living in the Rue du Bondy now."

"Lousteau, dear boy, who is the handsome young man that you have brought with you?" asked the actress, now returned to the wings.

"A great poet, dear, that will have a famous name one of these days.—M. Nathan, I must introduce M. Lucien de Rubempré to you, as you are to meet again at supper."

"You have a good name, monsieur," said Nathan.

"Lucien, M. Raoul Nathan," continued Étienne.

"I read your book two days ago; and, upon my word, I cannot understand how you, who have written such a book, and such poetry, can be so humble to a journalist."

"Wait till your first book comes out," said Nathan, and a shrewd smile flitted over his face.

"I say! I say! here are Ultras and Liberals actually shaking hands!" cried Vernou, spying the trio.

"In the morning I hold the views of my paper," said Nathan, "in the evening I think as I please; all journalists see double at night."

Félicien Vernou turned to Lousteau.

"Finot is looking for you, Étienne; he came with me, and—here he is!"

"Ah, by the by, there is not a place in the house, is there?" asked Finot.



"You will always find a place in our hearts," said the actress, with the sweetest smile imaginable.

"I say, my little Florville, are you cured already of your fancy? They told me that a Russian prince had carried you off."

"Who carries off women in these days?" said Florville (she who had cried, "Stop, wretched man!"). "We stayed at Saint-Mandé for ten days, and my prince got off with paying the forfeit-money to the management. The manager will go down on his knees to pray for some more Russian princes," Florville continued, laughing; "the forfeit-money was so much clear gain."

"And as for you, child," said Finot, turning to a pretty girl in peasant's costume, "where did you steal these diamond ear-drops? Have you hooked an Indian prince?"

"No, a blacking manufacturer, an Englishman, who has gone off already. It is not everybody who can find millionaire shopkeepers, tired of domestic life, whenever they like, as Florine does and Coralie. Aren't they just lucky?"

"Florville, you will make a bad entry," said Lousteau; "the blacking has gone to your head!"

"If you want a success," said Nathan, "instead of screaming, 'He is saved!' like a Fury, walk on quite quietly, go to the staircase, and say, 'He is saved,' in a chest voice, like Pasta's '*O patria*,' in *Tancredi*.—There, go along!" and he pushed her towards the stage.

"It is too late," said Vernou, "the effect has hung fire."

"What did she do? the house is applauding like mad," asked Lousteau.

"Went down on her knees and showed her bosom; that is her great resource," said the blacking-maker's widow.

"The manager is giving up the stage-box to us; you will find me there when you come," said Finot, as Lousteau walked off with Lucien.

At the back of the stage, through a labyrinth of scenery and corridors, the pair climbed several flights of stairs and reached a little room on a third floor, Nathan and Félicien Vernou following them.

"Good-day or good-night, gentlemen," said Florine.

Then, turning to a short, stout man standing in a corner, "These gentlemen are the rulers of my destiny," she said, "my future is in their hands; but they will be under our table to-morrow morning, I hope, if M. Lousteau has forgotten nothing——"

"Forgotten! You are going to have Blondet of the *Débats*," said Étienne, "the genuine Blondet, the very Blondet—Blondet himself, in short."

"Oh! Lousteau, you dear boy! stop, I must give you a kiss," and she flung her arms about the journalist's neck. Matifat, the stout person in the corner, looked serious at this.

Florine was thin; her beauty, like a bud, gave promise of the flower to come; the girl of sixteen could only delight the eyes of artists who prefer the sketch to the picture. All the quick subtlety of her character was visible in the features of the charming actress, who at that time might have sat for Goethe's Mignon. Matifat, a wealthy druggist of the Rue des Lombards, had imagined that a little boulevard actress would have no very expensive tastes, but in eleven months Florine had cost him sixty thousand francs. Nothing seemed more extraordinary to Lucien than the sight of an honest and worthy merchant standing like a statue of the god Terminus in the actress's narrow dressing-room, a tiny place some ten feet square, hung with a pretty wall-paper, and adorned with a full-length mirror, a sofa, and two chairs. There was a fireplace in the dressing-closet, a carpet on the floor, and cupboards all round the room. A dresser was putting the finishing touches to a Spanish costume; for Florine was to take the part of a countess in an imbroglia.

"That girl will be the handsomest actress in Paris in five years' time," said Nathan, turning to Félicien Vernou.

"By the by, darlings, you will take care of me to-morrow, won't you?" said Florine, turning to the three journalists. "I have engaged cabs for to-night, for I am going to send you home as tipsy as Shrove Tuesday. Matifat has sent in wines—oh! wines worthy of Louis XVIII., and engaged the Prussian ambassador's cook."

"We expect something enormous from the look of the gentleman," remarked Nathan.

"And he is quite aware that he is treating the most dangerous men in Paris," added Florine.

Matifat was looking uneasily at Lucien; he felt jealous of the young man's good looks.

"But here is someone that I do not know," Florine continued, confronting Lucien. "Which of you has imported the Apollo Belvedere from Florence? He is as charming as one of Girodet's figures."

"He is a poet, mademoiselle, from the provinces. I forgot to present him to you; you are so beautiful to-night that you put the *Complete Guide to Etiquette* out of a man's head——"

"Is he so rich that he can afford to write poetry?" asked Florine.

"Poor as Job," said Lucien.

"It is a great temptation for some of us," said the actress.

Just then the author of the play suddenly entered, and Lucien beheld M. du Bruel, a short, attenuated young man in an overcoat, a composite human blend of the jack-in-office, the owner of house-property, and the stockbroker.

"Florine, child," said this personage, "are you sure of your part, eh? No slips of memory, you know. And mind that scene in the second act, make the irony tell, bring out that subtle touch; say, 'I do not love you,' just as we agreed."

"Why do you take parts in which you have to say such things?" asked Matifat.

The druggist's remark was received with a general shout of laughter.

"What does it matter to you," said Florine, "so long as I don't say such things to you, great stupid?—Oh! his stupidity is the pleasure of my life," she continued, glancing at the journalists. "Upon my word, I would pay him so much for every blunder, if it would not be the ruin of me."

"Yes, but you will look at me when you say it, as you

do when you are rehearsing, and it gives me a turn," remonstrated the druggist.

"Very well, then, I will look at my friend Lousteau here."

A bell rang outside in the passage.

"Go out, all of you!" cried Florine; "let me read my part over again and try to understand it."

Lucien and Lousteau were the last to go. Lousteau set a kiss on Florine's shoulder, and Lucien heard her say, "Not to-night. Impossible. That stupid old animal told his wife that he was going out into the country."

"Isn't she charming?" said Étienne, as they came away.

"But—but that Matifat, my dear fellow——"

"Oh! you know nothing of Parisian life, my boy. Some things cannot be helped. Suppose that you fell in love with a married woman, it comes to the same thing. It all depends on the way that you look at it."

Étienne and Lucien entered the stage-box, and found the manager there with Finot. Matifat was in the ground-floor box exactly opposite with a friend of his, a silk-mercier named Camusot (Coralie's protector), and a worthy little old soul, his father-in-law. All three of these city men were polishing their opera glasses, and anxiously scanning the house; certain symptoms in the pit appeared to disturb them. The usual heterogeneous first-night elements filled the boxes—journalists and their mistresses, lorettes and their lovers, a sprinkling of the determined playgoers who never miss a first night if they can help it, and a very few people of fashion who care for this sort of sensation. The first box was occupied by the head of a department, to whom du Bruel, maker of vaudevilles, owed a snug little sinecure in the Treasury.

Lucien had gone from surprise to surprise since the dinner at Flicoteaux's. For two months Literature had meant a life of poverty and want; in Lousteau's room he had seen it at its cynical worst; in the Wooden Galleries he had met Literature abject and Literature insolent. The sharp contrasts of heights and depths; of compromise with conscience; of supreme power and want of principle; of treachery and pleasure; of mental elevation and bondage—all this made

his head swim, he seemed to be watching some strange unheard-of drama.

Finot was talking with the manager. "Do you think du Bruel's piece will pay?" he asked.

"Du Bruel has tried to do something in Beaumarchais's style. Boulevard audiences don't care for that kind of thing; they like harrowing sensations; wit is not much appreciated here. Everything depends on Florine and Coralie to-night; they are bewitchingly pretty and graceful, wear very short skirts, and dance a Spanish dance, and possibly they may carry off the piece with the public. The whole affair is a gambling speculation. A few clever notices in the papers, and I may make a hundred thousand crowns, if the play takes."

"Oh! come, it will only be a moderate success, I can see," said Finot.

"Three of the theaters have got up a plot," continued the managers; "they will even hiss the piece, but I have made arrangements to defeat their kind intentions. I have squared the men in their pay; they will make a muddle of it. A couple of city men yonder have taken a hundred tickets apiece to secure a triumph for Florine and Coralie, and given them to acquaintances able and ready to act as chuckers out. The fellows, having been paid twice, will go quietly, and a scene of that sort always makes a good impression on the house."

"Two hundred tickets! What invaluable men!" exclaimed Finot.

"Yes. With two more actresses as handsomely kept as Florine and Coralie, I should make something out of the business."

For the past two hours the word money had been sounding in Lucien's ears as the solution of every difficulty. In the theater as in the publishing trade, and in the publishing trade as in the newspaper office—it was everywhere the same; there was not a word of art or of glory. The steady beat of the great pendulum, Money, seemed to fall like hammer-strokes on his heart and brain. And yet while the orchestra played the overture, while the pit was full of noisy tumult

of applause and hisses, unconsciously he drew a comparison between this scene and others that came up in his mind. Visions arose before him of David and the printing office, of the poetry that he came to know in that atmosphere of pure peace, when together they beheld the wonders of Art, the high successes of genius, and visions of glory borne on stainless wings. He thought of the evenings spent with d'Arthez and his friends, and tears glittered in his eyes.

"What is the matter with you?" asked Étienne Lousteau.

"I see poetry fallen into the mire."

"Ah! you have still some illusions left, my dear fellow."

"Is there nothing for it but to cringe and submit to thick-heads like Matifat and Camusot, as actresses bow down to journalists, and we ourselves to the booksellers?"

"My boy, do you see that dull-brained fellow?" said Étienne, lowering his voice, and glancing at Finot. "He has neither genius nor cleverness, but he is covetous; he means to make a fortune at all costs, and he is a keen man of business. Didn't you see how he made forty per cent. out of me at Dauriat's, and talked as if he were doing me a favor?—Well, he gets letters from not a few unknown men of genius who go down on their knees to him for a hundred francs."

The words recalled the pen-and-ink sketch that lay on the table in the editor's office and the words, "Finot, my hundred francs!" Lucien's inmost soul shrank from the man in disgust.

"I would sooner die," he said.

"Sooner live," retorted Étienne.

The curtain rose, and the stage manager went off to the wings to give orders. Finot turned to Étienne.

"My dear fellow, Dauriat has passed his word; I am proprietor of one-third of his weekly paper. I have agreed to give thirty thousand francs in cash, on condition that I am to be editor and director. 'Tis a splendid thing. Blondet told me that the Government intends to take restrictive measures against the press; there will be no new papers allowed; in six months' time it will cost a million

francs to start a new journal, so I struck the bargain though I have only ten thousand francs in hand. Listen to me. If you can sell one-half of my share, that is one-sixth of the paper, to Matifat for thirty thousand francs, you shall be editor of my little paper with a salary of two hundred and fifty francs per month. I want in any case to have the control of my old paper, and to keep my hold upon it; but nobody need know that, and your name will appear as editor. You will be paid at the rate of five francs per column; you need not pay contributors more than three francs, and you keep the difference. That means another four hundred and fifty francs per month. But, at the same time, I reserve the right to use the paper to attack or defend men or causes, as I please; and you may indulge your own likes and dislikes so long as you do not interfere with my schemes. Perhaps I may be a Ministerialist, perhaps Ultra, I do not know yet; but I mean to keep up my connection with the Liberal party (below the surface). I can speak out with you; you are a good fellow. I might, perhaps, give you the Chambers to do for another paper on which I work; I am afraid I can scarcely keep on with it now. So let Florine do this bit of jockeying; tell her to put the screws on her druggist. If I can't find the money within forty-eight hours, I must cry off my bargain. Dauriat sold another third to his printer and paper-dealer for thirty thousand francs; so he has his own third gratis, and ten thousand francs to the good, for he only gave fifty thousand for the whole affair. And in another year's time the magazine will be worth two hundred thousand francs, if the Court buys it up; if the Court has the good sense to suppress newspapers, as they say."

"You are lucky," said Lousteau.

"If you had gone through all that I have endured, you would not say that of me. I had my fill of misery in those days, you see, and there was no help for it. My father is a hatter; he still keeps a shop in the Rue du Coq. Nothing but millions of money or a social cataclysm can open out the way to my goal; and of the two alternatives, I don't know now that the revolution is not the easier. If I bore

your friend's name, I should have a chance to get on. Hush, here comes the manager. Good-by," and Finot rose to his feet, "I am going to the Opéra. I shall very likely have a duel on my hands to-morrow, for I have put my initials to a terrific attack on a couple of dancers under the protection of two Generals. I am giving it them hot and strong at the Opéra."

"Aha?" said the manager.

"Yes. They are stingy with me," returned Finot, "now cutting off a box, and now declining to take fifty subscriptions. I have sent in my ultimatum; I mean to have a hundred subscriptions out of them and a box four times a month. If they take my terms, I shall have eight hundred readers and a thousand paying subscribers; and I know a way of getting another two hundred subscribers, so we shall have twelve hundred with the New Year."

"You will end by ruining us," said the manager.

"You are not much hurt with your ten subscriptions. I had two good notices put into the *Constitutionnel*."

"Oh! I am not complaining of you," cried the manager.

"Good-by till to-morrow evening, Lousteau," said Finot.

"You can give me your answer at the Français; there is a new piece on there; and as I shall not be able to write the notice, you can take my box. I will give you the preference; you have worked yourself to death for me, and I am grateful. Félicien Vernou offered twenty thousand francs for a third share of my little paper, and to work without salary for a twelvemonth; but I want to be absolute master. Good-by."

"He is not named Finot" (*finaud*, slyboots) "for nothing," said Lucien.

"He is a gallows-bird that will get on in the world," said Étienne, careless whether the wily schemer overheard the remark or no, as he shut the door of the box.

"*He!*" said the manager. "He will be a millionaire; he will enjoy the respect of all who know him; he may perhaps have friends some day——"

"Good Heavens! what a den!" said Lucien. "And are you going to drag that exquisite creature into such a busi-



ness?" he continued, looking at Florine, who gave them side glances from the stage.

"She will carry it through too. You do not know the devotion and the wiles of these beloved beings," said Lousteau.

"They redeem their failings and expiate all their sins by boundless love, when they love," said the manager. "A great love is all the grander in an actress by reason of its violent contrast with her surroundings."

"And he who finds it, finds a diamond worthy of the proudest crown lying in the mud," returned Lousteau.

"But Coralie is not attending to her part," remarked the manager. "Coralie is smitten with our friend here, all unsuspecting of his conquest, and Coralie will make a fiasco; she is missing her cues, this is the second time she has not heard the prompter. Pray go into the corner, monsieur," he continued. "If Coralie is smitten with you, I will go and tell her that you have left the house."

"No! no!" cried Lousteau; "tell Coralie that this gentleman is coming to supper, and that she can do as she likes with him, and she will play like Mlle. Mars."

The manager went, and Lucien turned to Étienne. "What! do you mean to say that you will ask that druggist, through Mlle. Florine, to pay thirty thousand francs for one-half a share, when Finot gave no more for the whole of it? And ask without the slightest scruple?—"

Lousteau interrupted Lucien before he had time to finish his expostulation. "My dear boy, what country can you come from? The druggist is not a man; he is a strong box delivered into our hands by his fancy for an actress."

"How about your conscience?"

"Conscience, my dear fellow, is a stick which everyone takes up to beat his neighbor and not for application to his own back. Come, now! who the devil are you angry with? In one day chance has worked a miracle for you, a miracle for which I have been waiting these two years, and you must needs amuse yourself by finding fault with the means? What! you appear to me to possess intelligence; you seem to be in a fair way to reach that freedom from

prejudice which is a first necessity to intellectual adventurers in the world we live in; and are you wallowing in scruples worthy of a nun who accuses herself of eating an egg with concupiscence? . . . If Florine succeeds, I shall be editor of a newspaper with a fixed salary of two hundred and fifty francs per month; I shall take the important plays and leave the vaudevilles to Vernou, and you can take my place and do the boulevard theaters, and so get a foot in the stirrup. You will make three francs per column and write a column a day—thirty columns a month means ninety francs; you will have some sixty francs' worth of books to sell to Barbet; and lastly, you can demand ten tickets a month of each of your theaters—that is, forty tickets in all—and sell them for forty francs to a Barbet who deals in them (I will introduce you to the man), so you will have two hundred francs coming in every month. Then if you make yourself useful to Finot, you might get a hundred francs for an article in this new weekly review of his, in which case you should show uncommon talent, for all the articles are signed, and you cannot put in slipshod work as you can on a small paper. In that case you would be making a hundred crowns a month. Now, my dear boy, there are men of ability, like that poor d'Arthez, who dines at Flicoteaux's every day, who may wait for ten years before they will make a hundred crowns; and you will be making four hundred francs a year by your pen, to say nothing of the books which you will write for the trade, if you do work of that kind.

“Now, a sub-prefect's salary only amounts to a thousand crowns, and there he stops in his arrondissement, wearing away time like the rung of a chair. I say nothing of the pleasure of going to the theater without paying for your seat, for that is a delight which quickly palls; but you can go behind the scenes in four theaters. Be hard and sarcastic for a month or two, and you will be simply overwhelmed with invitations from actresses, and their adorers will pay court to you; you will only dine at Flicoteaux's when you happen to have less than thirty sous in your pocket and no dinner engagement. At the Luxembourg, at five

o'clock, you did not know which way to turn; now, you are on the eve of entering a privileged class, you will be one of the hundred persons who tell France what to think. In three days' time, if all goes well, you can, if you choose, make a man's life a curse to him by putting thirty jokes at his expense in print at the rate of three a day; you can, if you choose, draw a revenue of pleasure from the actresses at your theaters; you can wreck a good play and send all Paris running after a bad one. If Dauriat declines to pay you for your *Marguerites*, you can make him come to you, and meekly and humbly implore you to take two thousand francs for them. If you have the ability, and knock off two or three articles that threaten to spoil some of Dauriat's speculations, or to ruin a book on which he counts, you will see him come climbing up your stairs like a clematis, and always at the door of your dwelling. As for your novel, the booksellers who would show you more or less politely to the door at this moment, will be standing outside your attic in a string, and the value of the manuscript, which old Doguereau valued at four hundred francs, will rise to four thousand. These are the advantages of the journalist's profession. So let us do our best to keep all newcomers out of it. It needs an immense amount of brains to make your way, and a still greater amount of luck. And here are you quibbling over your good fortune! If we had not met to-day, you see, at Flicoteaux's, you might have danced attendance on the booksellers for another three years, or starved like d'Arthez in a garret. By the time that d'Arthez is as learned as Bayle and as great a writer of prose as Rousseau, we shall have made our fortunes, you and I, and we shall hold his in our hands—wealth and fame to give or to hold. Finot will be a deputy and proprietor of a great newspaper, and we shall be whatever we meant to be—peers of France, or prisoners for debt in Sainte-Pélagie."

"So Finot will sell his paper to the highest bidder among the Ministers, just as he sells favorable notices to Mme. Bastienne and runs down Mlle. Virginie, saying that Mme. Bastienne's bonnets are superior to the millinery which they

praised at first!" said Lucien, recollecting that scene in the office.

"My dear fellow, you are a simpleton," Lousteau remarked dryly. "Three years ago Finot was walking on the uppers of his boots, dining for eighteen sous at Tabar's, and knocking off a tradesman's prospectus (when he could get it) for ten francs. His clothes hung together by some miracle as mysterious as the Immaculate Conception. *Now*, Finot has a paper of his own, worth about a hundred thousand francs. What with subscribers who pay and take no copies, genuine subscriptions, and indirect taxes levied by his uncle, he is making twenty thousand francs a year. He dines most sumptuously every day; he has set up a cabriolet within the last month; and now, at last, behold him the editor of a weekly review with a sixth share, for which he will not pay one penny, a salary of five hundred francs per month, and another thousand francs for supplying matter which costs him nothing, and for which the firm pays. You yourself, to begin with, if Finot consents to pay you fifty francs per sheet, will be only too glad to let him have two or three articles for nothing. When you are in his position, you can judge Finot; a man can only be tried by his peers. And for you, is there not an immense future opening out before you, if you will blindly minister to his enmity, attack at Finot's bidding, and praise when he gives the word? Suppose that you yourself wish to be revenged upon somebody, you can break a foe or friend on the wheel. You have only to say to me, 'Lousteau, let us put an end to So-and so,' and we will kill him by a phrase put in the paper morning by morning; and afterwards you can slay the slain with a solemn article in Finot's weekly. Indeed, if it is a matter of capital importance to you, Finot would allow you to bludgeon your man in a big paper with ten or twelve thousand subscribers, *if* you make yourself indispensable to Finot."

"Then are you sure that Florine can bring her druggist to make the bargain?" asked Lucien, dazzled by these prospects.

"Quite sure. Now comes the interval, I will go and tell

her everything at once in a word or two; it will be settled to-night. If Florine once has her lesson by heart, she will have all my wit and her own besides."

"And there sits that honest tradesman, gaping with open-mouthed admiration at Florine, little suspecting that you are about to get thirty thousand francs out of him!—"

"More twaddle! Anybody might think that the man was going to be robbed!" cried Lousteau. "Why, my dear boy, if the Minister buys the newspaper, the druggist may make twenty thousand francs in six months on an investment of thirty thousand. Matifat is not looking at the newspaper, but at Florine's prospects. As soon as it is known that Matifat and Camusot—for they will go shares—that Matifat and Camusot are proprietors of a review, the newspapers will be full of friendly notices of Florine and Coralie. Florine's name will be made; she will perhaps obtain an engagement in another theater with a salary of twelve thousand francs. In fact, Matifat will save a thousand francs every month in dinners and presents to journalists. You know nothing of men, nor of the way things are managed."

"Poor man!" said Lucien, "he is looking forward to an evening's pleasure."

"And he will be sawn in two with arguments until Florine sees Finot's receipt for a sixth share of the paper. And to-morrow I shall be editor of Finot's paper, and making a thousand francs a month. The end of my troubles is in sight!" cried Florine's lover.

Lousteau went out, and Lucien sat like one bewildered, lost in the infinite of thought, soaring above this everyday world. In the Wooden Galleries he had seen the wires by which the trade in books is moved; he had seen something of the kitchen where great reputations are made; he had been behind the scenes; he had seen the seamy side of life, the consciences of men involved in the machinery of Paris, the mechanism of it all. As he watched Florine on the stage he almost envied Lousteau his good fortune; already, for a few moments, he had forgotten Matifat in the background.

He was not left alone for long, perhaps for not more than five minutes, but those minutes seemed an eternity.

Thoughts rose within him that set his soul on fire, as the spectacle on the stage had heated his senses. He looked at the women with their wanton eyes, all the brighter for the red paint on their cheeks, at the gleaming bare necks, the luxuriant forms outlined by the lascivious folds of the *basquina*, the very short skirts, that displayed as much as possible of limbs incased in scarlet stockings with green clocks to them—a disquieting vision for the pit.

A double process of corruption was working within him in parallel lines, like two channels that will spread sooner or later in flood time and make one. That corruption was eating into Lucien's soul, as he leaned back in his corner, staring vacantly at the curtain, one arm resting on the crimson velvet cushion, and his hand drooping over the edge. He felt the fascination of the life that was offered to him, of the gleams of light among its clouds; and this so much the more keenly because it shone out like a blaze of fireworks against the blank darkness of his own obscure, monotonous days of toil.

Suddenly his listless eyes became aware of a burning glance that reached him through a rent in the curtain, and roused him from his lethargy. Those were Coralie's eyes that glowed upon him. He lowered his head and looked across at Camusot, who just then entered the opposite box.

That amateur was a worthy silk-mercier of the Rue des Bourdonnais, stout and substantial, a judge in the commercial court, a father of four children, and the husband of a second wife. At the age of fifty-six, with a cap of gray hair on his head, he had the smug appearance of a man who has his eighty thousand francs of income; and having been forced to put up with a good deal that he did not like in the way of business, has fully made up his mind to enjoy the rest of life, and not to quit this earth until he has had his share of cakes and ale. A brow the color of fresh butter and florid cheeks like a monk's jowl seemed scarcely big enough to contain his exuberant jubilation. Camusot had left his wife at home, and they were

applauding Coralie to the skies! All the rich man's citizen-vanity was summed up and gratified in Coralie; in Coralie's lodging he gave himself the airs of a great lord of a by-gone day; now, at this moment, he felt that half of her success was his; the knowledge that he had paid for it confirmed him in this idea. Camusot's conduct was sanctioned by the presence of his father-in-law, a little old foggy with powdered hair and leering eyes, highly respected nevertheless.

Again Lucien felt disgust rising within him. He thought of the year when he loved Mme. de Bargeton with an exalted and disinterested love; and at that thought love, as a poet understands it, spread its white wings about him; countless memories drew a circle of distant blue horizon about the great man of Angoulême, and again he fell to dreaming.

Up went the curtain, and there stood Coralie and Florine upon the stage.

"He is thinking about as much of you as of the Grand Turk, my dear girl," Florine said in an aside while Coralie was finishing her speech.

Lucien could not help laughing. He looked at Coralie. She was one of the most charming and captivating actresses in Paris, rivaling Mme. Perrin and Mlle. Fleuriet, and destined likewise to share their fate. Coralie was a woman of a type that exerts at will a power of fascination over men. With an oval face of deep ivory tint, a mouth red as a pomegranate, and a chin subtly delicate in its contour as the edge of a porcelain cup, Coralie was a Jewess of the sublime type. The jet black eyes behind their curving lashes seemed to scorch her eyelids; you could guess how soft they might grow, or how sparks of the heat of the desert might flash from them in response to a summons from within. The circles of olive shadow about them were bounded by thick arching lines of eyebrow. Magnificent mental power, well-nigh amounting to genius, seemed to dwell in the swarthy forehead beneath the double curve of ebony hair that lay upon it like a crown, and gleamed in the light like a varnished surface; but like many another actress, Coralie had little wit in spite of her aptness at greenroom

repartee, and scarcely any education in spite of her boudoir experience. Her brain was prompted by her senses, her kindness was the impulsive warm-heartedness of girls of her class. But who could trouble over Coralie's psychology when his eyes were dazzled by those smooth, round arms of hers, the spindle-shaped fingers, the fair white shoulders, and breast celebrated in the Song of Songs, the flexible curving lines of throat, the graciously molded outlines beneath the scarlet silk stockings? And this beauty, worthy of an Eastern poet, was brought into relief by the conventional Spanish costume of the stage. Coralie was the delight of the pit; all eyes dwelt on the outlines molded by the clinging folds of her bodice, and lingered over the Andalusian contour of the hips from which her skirt hung, fluttering wantonly with every movement. To Lucien, watching this creature, who played for him alone, caring no more for Camusot than a street-boy in the gallery cares for an apple-paring, there came a moment when he set desire above love, and enjoyment above desire, and the demon of Lust stirred strange thoughts in him.

"I know nothing of the love that wallows in luxury and wine and sensual pleasure," he said within himself. "I have lived more with ideas than with realities. You must pass through all experience if you mean to render all experience. This will be my first great supper, my first orgy in a new and strange world; why should I not know, for once, the delights which the great lords of the eighteenth century sought so eagerly of wantons of the Opéra? Must one not first learn of courtesans and actresses the delights, the perfections, the transports, the resources, the subtleties of love, if only to translate them afterwards into the regions of a higher love than this? And what is all this, after all, but the poetry of the senses? Two months ago these women seemed to me to be goddesses guarded by dragons that no one dared approach; I was envying Lousteau just now, but here is another handsomer than Florine; why should I not profit by her fancy, when the greatest nobles buy a night with such women with their richest treasures? When ambassadors set foot in these depths, they fling aside all thought



of yesterday or to-morrow. I should be a fool to be more squeamish than princes, especially as I love no one as yet."

Lucien had quite forgotten Camusot. To Lousteau he had expressed the utmost disgust for this most hateful of all partitions, and now he himself had sunk to the same level, and, carried away by the casuistry of his vehement desire, had given the reins to his fancy.

"Coralie is raving about you," said Lousteau as he came in. "Your countenance, worthy of the greatest Greek sculptors, has worked unutterable havoc behind the scenes. You are in luck, my dear boy. Coralie is eighteen years old, and in a few days' time she may be making sixty thousand francs a year by her beauty. She is an honest girl still. Since her mother sold her three years ago for sixty thousand francs, she has tried to find happiness, and found nothing but annoyance. She took to the stage in a desperate mood; she has a horror of her first purchaser, de Marsay; and when she came out of the galleys, for the king of dandies soon dropped her, she picked up old Camusot. She does not care much about him, but he is like a father to her, and she endures him and his love. Several times already she has refused the handsomest proposals; she is faithful to Camusot, who lets her live in peace. So you are her first love. The first sight of you went to her heart like a pistol-shot, Florine has gone to her dressing-room to bring the girl to reason. She is crying over your cruelty; she has forgotten her part, the play will go to pieces, and good-day to the engagement at the Gymnase which Camusot had planned for her."

"Pooh! . . . Poor thing!" said Lucien. Every instinct of vanity was tickled by the words; he felt his heart swell high with self-conceit. "More adventures have befallen me in this one evening, my dear fellow, than in all the first eighteen years of my life." And Lucien related the history of his love affairs with Mme. de Bargeton, and of the cordial hatred he bore the Baron du Châtelet."

"Stay though! the newspaper wants a *bête noire*; we will take him up. The Baron is a buck of the Empire and a Ministerialist; he is the man for us; I have seen him

many a time at the Opéra. I can see your great lady as I sit here; she is often in the Marquise d'Espard's box. The Baron is paying court to your lady love, a cuttlefish bone that she is. Wait! Finot has just sent a special messenger round to say that they are short of copy at the office. Young Hector Merlin has left them in the lurch because they did not pay for white lines. Finot, in despair, is knocking off an article against the Opéra. Well now, my dear fellow, you can do this play; listen to it and think it over, and I will go to the manager's office and think out three columns about your man and your disdainful fair one. They will be in no pleasant predicament to-morrow."

"So this is how a newspaper is written?" said Lucien.

"It is always like this," answered Lousteau. "These ten months that I have been a journalist, they have always run short of copy at eight o'clock in the evening."

Manuscript sent to the printer is spoken of as "copy," doubtless because the writers are supposed to send in a fair copy of their work; or possibly the word is ironically derived from the Latin word *copia*, for copy is invariably scarce.

"We always mean to have a few numbers ready in advance, a grand idea that will never be realized," continued Lousteau. "It is ten o'clock, you see, and not a line has been written. I shall ask Vernou and Nathan for a score of epigrams on deputies, or on 'Chancellor Cruzoé,' or on the Ministry, or on friends of ours if it needs must be. A man in this pass would slaughter his parent, just as a privateer will load his guns with silver pieces taken out of the booty sooner than perish. Write a brilliant article, and you will make brilliant progress in Finot's estimation; for Finot has a lively sense of benefits to come, and that sort of gratitude is better than any kind of pledge, pawntickets always excepted, for they invariably represent something solid."

"What kind of men can journalists be? Are you to sit down at a table and be witty to order?"

"Just exactly as a lamp begins to burn when you apply a match—so long as there is any oil in it."

Lousteau's hand was on the lock when du Bruel came in with the manager.

"Permit me, monsieur, to take a message to Coralie; allow me to tell her that you will go home with her after supper, or my play will be ruined. The wretched girl does not know what she is doing or saying; she will cry when she ought to laugh, and laugh when she ought to cry. She has been hissed once already. You can still save the piece, and, after all, pleasure is not a misfortune."

"I am not accustomed to rivals, sir," Lucien answered.

"Pray don't tell her that!" cried the manager. "Coralie is just the girl to fling Camusot overboard and ruin herself in good earnest. The proprietor of the Golden Cocoon, worthy man, allows her two thousand francs a month, and pays for all her dresses and her *claqueurs*."

"As your promise pledges me to nothing, save your play," said Lucien, with a sultan's airs.

"But don't look as if you meant to snub that charming creature," pleaded du Bruel.

"Dear me! am I to write the notice of your play and smile on your heroine as well?" exclaimed the poet.

The author vanished with a signal to Coralie, who began to act forthwith in a marvelous way. Vignol, who played the part of the alcalde, and revealed for the first time his genius as an actor of old men, came forward amid a storm of applause to make an announcement to the house.

"The piece which we have the honor of playing for you this evening, gentlemen, is the work of MM. Raoul and de Cursy."

"Why, Nathan is partly responsible," said Lousteau. "I don't wonder that he looked in."

"*Coralie! Coralie!*" shouted the enraptured house. "Florine, too!" roared a voice of thunder from the opposite box, and other voices took up the cry, "*Florine and Coralie!*"

The curtain rose, Vignol reappeared between the two actresses; Matifat and Camusot flung wreaths on the stage, and Coralie stooped for her flowers and held them out to Lucien.

For him those two hours spent in the theater seemed to

be a dream. The spell that held him had begun to work when he went behind the scenes; and, in spite of its horrors, the atmosphere of the place, its sensuality and dissolute morals had affected the poet's still untainted nature. A sort of malaria that infects the soul seems to lurk among those dark, filthy passages filled with machinery, and lit with smoky, greasy lamps. The solemnity and reality of life disappear, the most sacred things are matter for a jest, the most impossible things seem to be true. Lucien felt as if he had taken some narcotic, and Coralie had completed the work. He plunged into this joyous intoxication.

The lights in the great chandelier were extinguished; there was no one left in the house except the box-keepers, busy taking away footstools and shutting doors, the noises echoing strangely through the empty theater. The footlights, blown out as one candle, sent up a fetid reek of smoke. The curtain rose again, a lantern was lowered from the ceiling, and firemen and stage carpenters departed on their rounds. The fairy scenes of the stage, the rows of fair faces in the boxes, the dazzling lights, the magical illusion of new scenery and costume had all disappeared, and dismal darkness, emptiness, and cold reigned in their stead. It was hideous. Lucien sat on in bewilderment.

"Well! are you coming, my boy?" Lousteau's voice called from the stage. "Jump down."

Lucien sprang over. He scarcely recognized Florine and Coralie in their ordinary quilted paletots and cloaks, with their faces hidden by hats and thick black veils. Two butterflies returned to the chrysalis stage could not be more completely transformed.

"Will you honor me by giving me your arm?" Coralie asked tremulously.

"With pleasure," said Lucien. He could feel the beating of her heart throbbing against his like some snared bird as she nestled closely to his side, with something of the delight of a cat that rubs herself against her master with eager silken caresses.

"So we are supping together!" she said.

The party of four found two cabs waiting for them at

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the door in the Rue des Fossés-du-Temple. Coralie drew Lucien to one of the two, in which Camusot and his father-in-law, old Cardot, were seated already. She offered du Bruel a fifth place, and the manager drove off with Florine, Matifat, and Lousteau.

"These hackney cabs are abominable things," said Coralie.

"Why don't you have a carriage?" returned du Bruel.

"*Why?*" she asked pettishly. "I do not like to tell you before M. Cardot's face; for he trained his son-in-law, no doubt. Would you believe it, little and old as he is, M. Cardot only gives Florentine five hundred francs a month, just about enough to pay for her rent and her grub and her clothes. The old Marquis de Rochegude offered me a brougham two months ago, and he has six hundred thousand francs a year, but I am an artist and not a common hussy."

"You shall have a carriage the day after to-morrow, miss," said Cardot benignly; "you never asked me for one."

"As if one *asked* for such a thing as that? What! you love a woman and let her paddle about in the mud at the risk of breaking her legs? Nobody but a knight of the yardstick likes to see a draggled skirt hem."

As she uttered the sharp words that cut Camusot to the quick, she groped for Lucien's knee, and pressed it between her own, and clasped her fingers tightly upon his hand. She was silent. All her power to feel seemed to be concentrated upon the ineffable joy of a moment which brings compensation for the whole wretched past of a life such as these poor creatures lead, and develops within their souls a poetry of which other women, happily ignorant of these violent revulsions, know nothing.

"You played like Mlle. Mars herself towards the end," said du Bruel.

"Yes," said Camusot, "something put her out at the beginning; but from the middle of the second act to the very end, she was enough to drive you wild with admiration. Half of the success of your play was due to her."

"And half of her success is due to me," said du Bruel.

"This is all much ado about nothing," said Coralie in an unfamiliar voice. And, seizing an opportunity in the

darkness, she carried Lucien's hand to her lips and kissed it and drenched it with tears. Lucien felt thrilled through and through by that touch, for in the humility of the courtesan's love there is a magnificence which might set an example to angels.

"Are you writing the dramatic criticism, monsieur?" said du Bruel, addressing Lucien; "you can write a charming paragraph about our dear Coralie."

"Oh! do us that little service!" pleaded Camusot, down on his knees, metaphorically speaking, before the critic. "You will always find me ready to do you a good turn at any time."

"Do leave him his independence," Coralie exclaimed angrily; "he will write what he pleases. Papa Camusot, buy carriages for me instead of praises."

"You shall have them on very easy terms," Lucien answered politely. "I have never written for newspapers before, so I am not accustomed to their ways, my maiden pen is at your disposal——"

"That is funny," said du Bruel.

"Here we are in the Rue de Bondy," said Cardot. Coralie's sally had quite crushed the little old man.

"If you are giving me the firstfruits of your pen, the first love that has sprung up in my heart shall be yours," whispered Coralie in the brief instant that they remained alone together in the cab; then she went up to Florine's bedroom to change her dress for a toilette previously sent.

Lucien had no idea how lavishly a prosperous merchant will spend money upon an actress or a mistress when he means to enjoy a life of pleasure. Matifat was not nearly so rich a man as his friend Camusot, and he had done his part rather shabbily, yet the sight of the dining-room took Lucien by surprise. The walls were hung with green cloth with a border of gilded nails, the whole room was artistically decorated, lighted by handsome lamps, stands full of flowers stood in every direction. The drawing-room was resplendent with the furniture in fashion in those days—a Thomire chandelier, a carpet of Eastern design, and yellow silken hangings relieved by a brown border. The candlesticks, fire-irons, and

clock were all in good taste; for Matifat had left everything to Grindot, a rising architect, who was building a house for him, and the young man had taken great pains with the rooms when he knew that Florine was to occupy them.

Matifat, a tradesman to the backbone, went about carefully, afraid to touch the new furniture; he seemed to have the totals of the bills always before his eyes, and to look upon the splendors about him as so much jewelry imprudently withdrawn from the case.

"And I shall be obliged to do as much for Florentine!" old Cardot's eyes seemed to say.

Lucien at once began to understand Lousteau's indifference to the state of his garret. Étienne was the real king of these festivals; Étienne enjoyed the use of all these fine things. He was standing just now on the hearth-rug with his back to the fire, as if he were the master of the house, chatting with the manager, who was congratulating du Bruel.

"Copy, copy!" called Finot, coming into the room. "There is nothing in the box; the printers are setting up my article, and they will soon have finished."

"We will manage," said Étienne. "There is a fire burning in Florine's boudoir; there is a table there; and if M. Matifat will find us paper and ink, we will knock off the newspaper while Florine and Coralie are dressing."

Cardot, Camusot, and Matifat disappeared in search of quills, penknives, and everything necessary. Suddenly the door was flung open, and Tullia, one of the prettiest opera dancers of the day, dashed into the room.

"They agree to take the hundred copies, dear boy!" she cried, addressing Finot; "they won't cost the management anything, for the chorus and the orchestra and the *corps de ballet* are to take them whether they like it or not; but your paper is so clever that nobody will grumble. And you are going to have your boxes. Here is the subscription for the first quarter," she continued, holding out a couple of banknotes; "so don't cut me up!"

"It is all over with me!" groaned Finot; "I must sup-

press my abominable diatribe, and I haven't another notion in my head."

"What a happy inspiration, divine Laïs!" exclaimed Blondet, who had followed the lady upstairs and brought Nathan, Vernou, and Claude Vignon with him. "Stop to supper, there is a dear, or I will crush thee, butterfly as thou art. There will be no professional jealousies, as you are a dancer; and as to beauty, you have all of you too much sense to show jealousy in public."

"Oh dear!" cried Finot, "Nathan, Blondet, du Bruel, help, friends! I want five columns."

"I can make two of the play," said Lucien.

"I have enough for one," added Lousteau.

"Very well; Nathan, Vernou and du Bruel will make the jokes at the end; and Blondet, good fellow, surely will vouchsafe a couple of short columns for the first sheet. I will run round to the printer. It is lucky that you brought your carriage, Tullia."

"Yes, but the Duke is waiting below in it, and he has a German Minister with him."

"Ask the Duke and the Minister to come up," said Nathan.

"A German? They are the ones to drink, and they listen too; he shall hear some astonishing things to send home to his Government," cried Blondet.

"Is there any sufficiently serious personage to go down to speak to him?" asked Finot. "Here, du Bruel, you are an official; bring up the Duc de Rhétoré and the Minister, and give your arm to Tullia. Dear me! Tullia, how handsome you are to-night!"

"We shall be thirteen at table!" exclaimed Matifat, paling visibly.

"No, fourteen," said a voice in the doorway, and Florentine appeared. "I have come to look after '*milord* Cardot,'" she added, speaking with a burlesque English accent.

"And besides," said Lousteau, "Claude Vignon came with Blondet."

"I brought him here to drink," returned Blondet, taking up an inkstand. "Look here, all of you, you must use all your wit before those fifty-six bottles of wine drive it out.



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And, of all things, stir up du Bruel; he is a vaudevilliste, he is capable of making bad jokes if you get him to concert pitch."

And Lucien wrote his first newspaper article at the round table in Florine's boudoir, by the light of the pink candles lighted by Matifat; before such a remarkable audience he was eager to show what he could do.

### THE PANORAMA-DRAMATIQUE.

First performance of the *Alcalde in a Fix*, an imbroglio in three acts.—First appearance of Mademoiselle Florine.—Mademoiselle Coralie.—Vignol.

People are coming and going, walking and talking, everybody is looking for something, nobody finds anything. General hubbub. The Alcalde has lost his daughter and found his cap, but the cap does not fit; it must belong to some thief. Where is the thief? People walk and talk, and come and go more than ever. Finally, the Alcalde finds a man without his daughter, and his daughter without the man, which is satisfactory for the magistrate, but not for the audience. Quiet being restored, the Alcalde tries to examine the man. Behold a venerable Alcalde, sitting in an Alcalde's great armchair, arranging the sleeves of his Alcalde's gown. Only in Spain do Alcaldes cling to their enormous sleeves and wear plaited lawn ruffles about the magisterial throat, a good half of an Alcalde's business on the stage in Paris. This particular Alcalde, wheezing and waddling about like an asthmatic old man, is Vignol, on whom Potier's mantle has fallen; a young actor who personates old age so admirably that the oldest men in the audience cannot help laughing. With that quavering voice of his, that bald forehead, and those spindle shanks trembling under the weight of a senile frame, he may look forward to a long career of decrepitude. There is something alarming about the young actor's old age; he is so very old; you feel nervous lest senility should be infectious. And what an admirable Alcalde he makes! What a delightful, uneasy smile! what pompous stupidity! what wooden dignity! what

judicial hesitation! How well the man knows that black may be white, or white black! How eminently well he is fitted to be Minister to a constitutional monarch! The stranger answers every one of his inquiries by a question; Vignol retorts in such a fashion, that the person under examination elicits all the truth from the Alcalde. This piece of pure comedy, with a breath of Molière throughout, put the house in good humor. The people on the stage all seemed to understand what they were about, but I am quite unable to clear up the mystery, or to say wherein it lay; for the Alcalde's daughter was there, personified by a living, breathing Andalusian, a Spaniard with a Spaniard's eyes, a Spaniard's complexion, a Spaniard's gait and figure, a Spaniard from top to toe, with her poniard in her garter, love in her heart, and a cross on the ribbon about her neck. When the act was over, and somebody asked me how the piece was going, I answered, "She wears scarlet stockings with green clocks to them; she has a little foot, no larger than *that*, in her patent leather shoes, and the prettiest pair of ankles in Andalusia!" Oh! that Alcalde's daughter brings your heart into your mouth; she tantalizes you so horribly, that you long to spring upon the stage and offer her your thatched hovel and your heart, or thirty thousand livres per annum and your pen. The Andalusian is the loveliest actress in Paris. Coralie, for she must be called by her real name, can be a countess or a *grisette*, and in which part she would be more charming one cannot tell. She can be anything she chooses; she is born to achieve all possibilities; can more be said of a boulevard actress?

With the second act, a Parisian Spaniard appeared upon the scene, with her features cut like a cameo and her dangerous eyes. "Where does she come from?" I asked in my turn, and was told that she came from the greenroom, and that she was Mlle. Florine; but, upon my word, I could not believe a syllable of it, such spirit was there in her gestures, such frenzy in her love. She is the rival of the Alcalde's daughter, and married to a grandee cut out to wear an Almaguilla's cloak, with stuff sufficient in it for a hundred boulevard noblemen. Mlle. Florine wore neither scarlet

\* stockings with green clocks, nor patent leather shoes, but she appeared in a mantilla, a veil which she put to admirable uses, like the great lady that she is! She showed to admiration that the tigress can be a cat. I began to understand, from the sparkling talk between the two, that some drama of jealousy was going on; and just as everything was put right, the Alcalde's stupidity embroiled everybody again. Torchbearers, rich men, footmen, Figaros, grandes, alcaldes, dames, and damsels—the whole company on the stage began to eddy about, and come and go, and look for one another. The plot thickened, again I left it to thicken; for Florine the jealous and the happy Coralie had entangled me once more in the folds of mantilla and basquina, and their little feet were twinkling in my eyes.

I managed, however, to reach the third act without any mishap. The commissary of police was not compelled to interfere, and I did nothing to scandalize the house, wherefore I begin to believe in the influence of that "public and religious morality," about which the Chamber of Deputies is so anxious, that anyone might think there was no morality left in France. I even contrived to gather that a man was in love with two women who failed to return his affection, or else that two women were in love with a man who loved neither of them; the man did not love the Alcalde, or the Alcalde had no love for the man, who was nevertheless a gallant gentleman, and in love with somebody, with himself, perhaps, or with Heaven, if the worst came to the worst, for he becomes a monk. And if you want to know any more, you can go to the Panorama-Dramatique. You are hereby given fair warning—you must go once to accustom yourself to those irresistible scarlet stockings with the green clocks, to little feet full of promises, to eyes with a ray of sunlight shining through them, to the subtle charm of a Parisienne disguised as an Andalusian girl, and of an Andalusian masquerading as a Parisienne. You must go a second time to enjoy the play, to shed tears over the love-distracted grandee, and die of laughing at the old Alcalde. The play is twice a success. The author, who writes, it is said, in collaboration with one of the great

poets of the day, was called before the curtain, and appeared with a love-distraught damsel on each arm, and fairly brought down the excited house. The two dancers seemed to have more wit in their legs than the author himself; but when once the fair rivals left the stage, the dialogue seemed witty at once, a triumphant proof of the excellence of the piece. The applause and calls for the author caused the architect some anxiety; but M. de Cursy, the author, being accustomed to the volcanic eruptions of the reeling Vesuvius beneath the chandelier, felt no tremor. As for the actresses, they danced the famous bolero of Seville, which once found favor in the sight of a council of reverend fathers, and escaped ecclesiastical censure in spite of its wanton dangerous grace. The bolero in itself would be enough to attract old age while there is any lingering heat of youth in the veins, and out of charity I warn these persons to keep the lenses of their opera glasses well polished.

While Lucien was writing a column which was to set a new fashion in journalism and reveal a fresh and original gift, Lousteau indited an article of the kind described as *mœurs*—a sketch of contemporary manners, entitled *The Elderly Beau*.

"The buck of the Empire," he wrote, "is invariably long, slender, and well preserved. He wears a corset and the Cross of the Legion of Honor. His name was originally Potelet, or something very like it; but to stand well with the Court, he conferred a *du* upon himself, and *du* Potelet he is until another revolution. A baron of the Empire, a man of two ends, as his name<sup>1</sup> implies, he is paying his court to the Faubourg Saint-Germain, after a youth gloriously and usefully spent as the agreeable trainbearer of a sister of the man whom decency forbids me to mention by name. Du Potelet has forgotten that he was once in waiting upon Her Imperial Highness; but he still sings the songs composed for the benefactress who took such a tender interest in his career," and so forth and so forth, it was a tissue of

<sup>1</sup> *Potelet*, a post.

personalities, silly enough for the most part, such as they used to write in those days. Other papers, and notably the *Figaro*, have brought the art to a curious perfection since. Lousteau compared the Baron to a heron, and introduced Mme. de Bargeton, to whom he was paying his court, as a cuttlefish bone, a burlesque absurdity which amused readers who knew neither of the personages. The tale of the loves of the Heron, who tried in vain to swallow the Cuttlefish bone, which broke into three pieces when he dropped it, was irresistibly ludicrous. Everybody remembers the sensation which the pleasantry made in the Faubourg Saint-Germain; it was the first of a series of similar articles, and was one of the thousand and one causes which provoked the rigorous press legislation of Charles X.

An hour later, Blondet, Lousteau, and Lucien came back to the drawing-room, where the other guests were chatting. The Duke was there and the Minister, the four women, and three merchants, the manager, and Finot. A printer's devil, with a paper cap on his head, was waiting even then for copy.

"The men are just going off, if I have nothing to take them," he said.

"Stay a bit, here are ten francs, and tell them to wait," said Finot.

"If I gave them the money, sir, they would take to tippleography, and good-night to the newspaper."

"That boy's common-sense is appalling to me," remarked Finot; and the Minister was in the middle of a prediction of a brilliant future for the urchin, when the three came in. Blondet read aloud an extremely clever article against the Romantics; Lousteau's paragraph drew laughter, and by the Duc de Rhétoré's advice an indirect eulogium of Mme. d'Espard was slipped in, lest the whole Faubourg Saint-Germain should take offense.

"What have *you* written?" asked Finot, turning to Lucien.

And Lucien read, quaking for fear, but the room rang with applause when he finished; the actresses embraced the neophyte; and the two merchants, following suit, half choked the breath out of him. There were tears in du Bruel's eyes

as he grasped his critic's hand, and the manager invited him to dinner.

"There are no children nowadays," said Blondet. "Since M. de Chateaubriand called Victor Hugo a 'sublime child,' I can only tell you quite simply that you have spirit and taste, and write like a gentleman."

"He is on the newspaper," said Finot, as he thanked Étienne, and gave him a shrewd glance.

"What jokes have you made?" inquired Lousteau, turning to Blondet and du Bruel.

"Here are du Bruel's," said Nathan.

\* \* "Now that M. le Vicomte d'A—— is attracting so much attention, they will perhaps let *me* alone," M. le Vicomte Demosthenes was heard to say yesterday.

\* \* An Ultra, condemning M. Pasquier's speech, said his programme was only a continuation of Decazes's policy. "Yes," said a lady, "but he stands on a Monarchical basis, he has just the kind of leg for a Court suit."

"With such a beginning, I don't ask more of you," said Finot; "it will be all right.—Run round with this," he added, turning to the boy; "the paper is not exactly a genuine article, but it is our best number yet," and he turned to the group of writers. Already Lucien's colleagues were privately taking his measure.

"That fellow has brains," said Blondet.

"His article is well written," said Claude Vignon.

"Supper!" cried Matifat.

The Duke gave his arm to Florine, Coralie went across to Lucien, and Tullia went in to supper between Emile Blondet and the German Minister.

"I cannot understand why you are making an onslaught on Mme. de Bargeton and the Baron du Châtelet; they say that he is prefect-designate of the Charente, and will be Master of Requests some day."

"Mme. de Bargeton showed Lucien the door as if he had been an impostor," said Lousteau.

"Such a fine young fellow!" exclaimed the Minister.

Supper, served with new plate, Sèvres porcelain, and white damask, was redolent of opulence. The dishes were from Chevet, the wines from a celebrated merchant on the Quai Saint-Bernard, a personal friend of Matifat's. For the first time Lucien beheld the luxury of Paris displayed; he went from surprise to surprise, but he kept his astonishment to himself, like a man who had spirit and taste and wrote like a gentleman, as Blondet had said.

As they crossed the drawing-room, Coralie bent to Florine, "Make Camusot so drunk that he will be compelled to stop here all night," she whispered.

"So you have hooked your journalist, have you?" returned Florine, using the idiom of women of her class.

"No, dear; I love him," said Coralie, with an adorable little shrug of the shoulders.

Those words rang in Lucien's ears, borne to them by the fifth deadly sin. Coralie was perfectly dressed. Every woman possesses some personal charm in perfection, and Coralie's toilette brought her characteristic beauty into prominence. Her dress, moreover, like Florine's, was of some exquisite stuff, unknown as yet to the public, a *mousseline de soie*, with which Camusot had been supplied a few days before the rest of the world; for, as owner of the Golden Cocoon, he was a kind of Providence in Paris to the Lyons silk-weavers.

Love and the toilet are like color and perfume for a woman, and Coralie in her happiness looked lovelier than ever. A looked-for delight which cannot elude the grasp possesses an immense charm for youth; perhaps in their eyes the secret of the attraction of a house of pleasure lies in the certainty of gratification; perhaps many a long fidelity is attributable to the same cause. Love for love's sake, first love indeed, had blent with one of the strange violent fancies which sometimes possess these poor creatures; and love and admiration of Lucien's great beauty taught Coralie to express the thoughts in her heart.

"I should love you if you were ill and ugly," she whispered as they sat down.

What a saying for a poet! Camusot utterly vanished, Lucien had forgotten his existence, he saw Coralie, and had eyes for nothing else. How should he draw back—this creature, all sensation, all enjoyment of life, tired of the monotony of existence in a country town, weary of poverty, harassed by enforced continence, impatient of the claustal life of the Rue de Cluny, of toiling without reward? The fascination of the under world of Paris was upon him; how should he rise and leave this brilliant gathering? Lucien stood with one foot in Coralie's chamber and the other in the quicksands of Journalism. After so much vain search, and climbing of so many stairs, after standing about and waiting in the Rue de Sentier, he had found Journalism a jolly boon companion, joyous over the wine. His wrongs had just been avenged. There were two for whom he had vainly striven to fill the cup of humiliation and pain which he had been made to drink to the dregs, and now to-morrow they should receive a stab in their very hearts. "Here is a real friend!" he thought, as he looked at Lousteau. It never crossed his mind that Lousteau already regarded him as a dangerous rival. He had made a blunder; he had done his very best when a colorless article would have served him admirably well. Blondet's remark to Finot that it would be better to come to terms with a man of that caliber, had counteracted Lousteau's gnawing jealousy. He reflected that it would be prudent to keep on good terms with Lucien, and, at the same time, to arrange with Finot to exploit this formidable newcomer—he must be kept in poverty. The decision was made in a moment, and the bargain made in a few whispered words.

"He has talent."

"He will want the more."

"Ah?"

"Good!"

"A supper among French journalists always fills me with dread," said the German diplomatist, with serene urbanity; he looked as he spoke at Blondet, whom he had met at the Comtesse de Montcornet's. "It is laid upon you, gentlemen, to fulfill a prophecy of Blücher's."



"What prophecy?" asked Nathan.

"When Blücher and Sacken arrived on the heights of Montmartre in 1814 (pardon me, gentlemen, for recalling a day unfortunate for France), Sacken (a rough brute), remarked, 'Now we will set Paris alight!'—'Take very good care that you don't,' said Blücher. 'France will die of *that*, nothing else can kill her,' and he waved his hand over the glowing, seething city, that lay like a huge canker in the valley of the Seine.—There are no journalists in our country, thank Heaven!" continued the Minister after a pause. "I have not yet recovered from the fright that little fellow gave me, a boy of ten, in a paper cap, with the sense of an old diplomatist. . . And to-night I feel as if I were supping with lions and panthers, who graciously sheathe their claws in my honor."

"It is clear," said Blondet, "that we are at liberty to inform Europe that a serpent dropped from your Excellency's lips this evening, and that the venomous creature failed to inoculate Mlle. Tullia, the prettiest dancer in Paris; and to follow up the story with a commentary on Eve, and the Scriptures, and the first and last transgression. But have no fear, you are our guest."

"It would be funny," said Finot.

"We would begin with a scientific treatise on all the serpents found in the human heart and human body, and so proceed to the *corps diplomatique*," said Lousteau.

"And we could exhibit one in spirits, in a bottle of brandied cherries," said Vernou.

"Till you yourself would end by believing in the story," added Vignon, looking at the diplomatist.

"Gentlemen," cried the Duc de Rhétoré, "let sleeping claws lie."

"The influence and power of the press is only dawning," said Finot. "Journalism is in its infancy; it will grow. In ten years' time, everything will be brought into publicity. The light of thought will be turned on all subjects, and——"

"The blight of thought will be over it all," corrected Blondet.

"Here is an apophthegm," cried Claude Vignon.

"Thought will make kings," said Lousteau.

"And undo monarchs," said the German.

"And therefore," said Blondet, "if the press did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it forthwith. But here we have it, and live by it."

"You will die of it," returned the German diplomatist. "Can you not see that if you enlighten the masses, and raise them in the political scale, you make it all the harder for the individual to rise above their level? Can you not see that if you sow the seeds of reasoning among the working-classes, you will reap revolt, and be the first to fall victims? What do they smash in Paris when a riot begins?"

"The street-lamps!" said Nathan; "but we are too modest to fear for ourselves, we only run the risk of cracks."

"As a nation, you have too much mental activity to allow any government to run its course without interference. But for that, you would make the conquest of Europe a second time, and win with the pen all that you failed to keep with the sword."

"Journalism is an evil," said Claude Vignon. "The evil may have its uses, but the present Government is resolved to put it down. There will be a battle over it. Who will give way? That is the question."

"The Government will give way," said Blondet. "I keep telling people that with all my might! Intellectual power is *the* great power in France; and the press has more wit than all men of intellect put together, and the hypocrisy of Tartuffe besides."

"Blondet! Blondet! you are going too far!" called Finot. "Subscribers are present."

"You are the proprietor of one of these poison shops; you have reason to be afraid; but I can laugh at the whole business, even if I live by it."

"Blondet is right," said Claude Vignon. "Journalism, so far from being in the hands of a priesthood, came to be first a party weapon, and then a commercial speculation, carried on without conscience or scruple, like other commercial speculations. Every newspaper, as Blondet says, is a shop to which people come for opinions of the right

shade. If there were a paper for hunchbacks, it would set forth plainly, morning and evening, in its columns, the beauty, utility, and necessity of deformity. A newspaper is not supposed to enlighten its readers, but to supply them with congenial opinions. Give any newspaper time enough, and it will be base, hypocritical, shameless, and treacherous; the periodical press will be the death of ideas, systems, and individuals; nay, it will flourish upon their decay. It will take the credit of all creations of the brain; the harm that it does is done anonymously. We, for instance—I, Claude Vignon; you, Blondet; you, Lousteau; and you, Finot—we are all Platos, Aristides, and Catos, Plutarch's men, in short; we are all immaculate; we may wash our hands of all iniquity. Napoleon's sublime aphorism, suggested by his study of the Convention, 'No one individual is responsible for a crime committed collectively,' sums up the whole significance of a phenomenon, moral or immoral, whichever you please. However shamefully a newspaper may behave; the disgrace attaches to no one person."

"The authorities will resort to repressive legislation," interposed du Bruel. "A law is going to be passed, in fact."

"Pooh!" retorted Nathan. "What is the law in France against the spirit in which it is received, the most subtle of all solvents?"

"Ideas and opinions can only be counteracted by opinions and ideas," Vignon continued. "By sheer terror and despotism, and by no other means, can you extinguish the genius of the French nation; for the language lends itself admirably to allusion and ambiguity. Epigram breaks out the more for repressive legislation; it is like steam in an engine without a safety-valve.—The King, for example, does right; if a newspaper is against him, the Minister gets all the credit of the measure, and vice versâ. A newspaper invents a scandalous libel—it has been misinformed. If the victim complains, the paper gets off with an apology for taking so great a freedom. If the case is taken into court, the editor complains that nobody asked him to rectify the mistake; but ask for redress, and he will laugh in your

face and treat his offense as a mere trifle. The paper scoffs if the victim gains the day; and if heavy damages are awarded, the plaintiff is held up as an unpatriotic obscurantist and a menace to the liberties of the country. In the course of an article purporting to explain that M. So-and-so is as honest a man as you will find in the kingdom, you are informed that he is no better than a common thief. The sins of the press? Pooh! mere trifles; the curtailers of its liberties are monsters; and give him time enough, the constant reader is persuaded to believe anything you please. Everything which does not suit the newspaper will be unpatriotic, and the press will be infallible. One religion will be played off against another, and the Charter against the King. The press will hold up the magistracy to scorn for meting out rigorous justice to the press, and applaud its action when it serves the cause of party hatred. The most sensational fictions will be invented to increase the circulation; Journalism will descend to mountebanks' tricks worthy of Bobèche; Journalism would serve up its father with the Attic salt of its own wit sooner than fail to interest or amuse the public; Journalism will outdo the actor who put his son's ashes into the urn to draw real tears from his eyes, or the mistress who sacrifices everything to her lover."

"Journalism is, in fact, the People in folio form," interrupted Blondet.

"The people with hypocrisy added and generosity lacking," said Vignon. "All real ability will be driven out from the ranks of Journalism, as Aristides was driven into exile by the Athenians. We shall see newspapers started in the first instance by men of honor, falling sooner or later into the hands of men of abilities even lower than the average, but endowed with the resistance and flexibility of indiarubber, qualities denied to noble genius; nay, perhaps the future newspaper proprietor will be the tradesman with capital sufficient to buy venal pens. We see such things already indeed, but in ten years' time every little youngster that has left school will take himself for a great man, slash his predecessors from the lofty height of a news-

paper column, drag them down by the feet, and take their place.

"Napoleon did wisely when he muzzled the press. I would wager that the Opposition papers would batter down a government of their own setting up, just as they are battering the present Government, if any demand was refused. The more they have, the more they will want in the way of concessions. The parvenu journalist will be succeeded by the starveling hack. There is no salve for this sore. It is a kind of corruption which grows more and more obtrusive and malignant; the wider it spreads, the more patiently it will be endured, until the day comes when newspapers shall so increase and multiply in the earth that confusion will be the result—a second Babel. We, all of us, such as we are, have reason to know that crowned kings are less ungrateful than kings of our profession; that the most sordid man of business is not so mercenary nor so keen in speculation; that our brains are consumed to furnish their daily supply of poisonous trash. And yet we, all of us, shall continue to write, like men who work in quicksilver mines, knowing that they are doomed to die of their trade.

"Look there," he continued, "at that young man sitting beside Coralie—what is his name? Lucien! He has a beautiful face; he is a poet; and what is more, he is witty—so much the better for him. Well, he will cross the threshold of one of those dens where a man's intellect is prostituted; he will put all his best and finest thought into his work; he will blunt his intellect and sully his soul; he will be guilty of anonymous meannesses which take the place of stratagem, pillage, and ratting to the enemy in the warfare of *condottieri*. And when, like hundreds more, he has squandered his genius in the service of others who find the capital and do no work, those dealers in poisons will leave him to starve if he is thirsty, and to die of thirst if he is starving."

"Thanks," said Finot.

"But, dear me," continued Claude Vignon, "*I* knew all this, yet here am I in the galleys, and the arrival of another convict gives me pleasure. We are cleverer, Blondet and

I, than MM. This and That, who speculate in our abilities, yet nevertheless we are always exploited by them. We have a heart somewhere beneath the intellect; we have *not* the grim qualities of the man who makes others work for him. We are indolent, we like to look on at the game, we are meditative, and we are fastidious; they will sweat our brains and blame us for improvidence."

"I thought you would be more amusing than this!" said Florine.

"Florine is right," said Blondet; "let us leave the cure of public evils to those quacks the statesmen. As Charlet says, 'Quarrel with my own bread and butter? *Never!*'"

"Do you know what Vignon puts me in mind of?" said Lousteau. "Of one of those fat women in the Rue du Pélican telling a schoolboy, 'My boy, you are too young to come here.'"

A burst of laughter followed the sally, but it pleased Coralie. The merchants meanwhile ate and drank and listened.

"What a nation this is! You see so much good in it and so much evil," said the Minister, addressing the Duc de Rhétoré.—"You are prodigals who cannot ruin yourselves, gentlemen."

And so, by the blessing of chance, Lucien, standing on the brink of the precipice over which he was destined to fall, heard warnings on all sides. D'Arthez had set him on the right road, had shown him the noble method of work, and aroused in him the spirit before which all obstacles disappear. Lousteau himself (partly from selfish motives) had tried to warn him away by describing Journalism and Literature in their practical aspects. Lucien had refused to believe that there could be so much hidden corruption; but now he had heard the journalists themselves crying woe for their hurt, he had seen them at their work, had watched them tearing their foster-mother's heart to read auguries of the future.

That evening he had seen things as they are. He beheld the very heart's core of corruption of that Paris which Blücher so aptly described; and so far from shuddering

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at the sight, he was intoxicated with enjoyment of the intellectually stimulating society in which he found himself.

These extraordinary men, clad in armor damascened by their vices, these intellects envired by cold and brilliant analysis, seemed so far greater in his eyes than the grave and earnest members of the brotherhood. And besides all this, he was reveling in his first taste of luxury; he had fallen under the spell. His capricious instincts awoke; for the first time in his life he drank exquisite wines, this was his first experience of cookery carried to the pitch of a fine art. A minister, a duke, and an opera dancer had joined the party of journalists, and wondered at their sinister power. Lucien felt a horrible craving to reign over these kings, and he thought that he had power to win his kingdom. Finally, there was this Coralie, made happy by a few words of his. By the bright light of the wax-candles, through the steam of the dishes and the fumes of wine, she looked sublimely beautiful to his eyes, so fair had she grown with love. She was the loveliest, the most beautiful actress in Paris. The brotherhood, the heaven of noble thoughts, faded away before a temptation that appealed to every fiber of his nature. How could it have been otherwise? Lucien's author's vanity had just been gratified by the praises of those who know; by the appreciation of his future rivals; the success of his articles and his conquest of Coralie might have turned an older head than his.

During the discussion, moreover, everyone at table had made a remarkably good supper, and such wines are not met with every day. Lousteau, sitting beside Camusot, furtively poured cherry-brandy several times into his neighbor's wineglass, and challenged him to drink. And Camusot drank, all unsuspecting, for he thought himself, in his own way, a match for a journalist. The jokes became more personal when dessert appeared and the wine began to circulate. The German Minister, a keen-witted man of the world, made a sign to the Duke and Tullia, and the three disappeared with the first symptoms of vociferous nonsense which precede the grotesque scenes of an orgy in its final stage. Coralie and Lucien had been behaving like children

all the evening; as soon as the wine was uppermost in Camusot's head, they made good their escape down the staircase and sprang into a cab. Camusot subsided under the table; Matifat, looking round for him, thought that he had gone home with Coralie, left his guests to smoke, laugh, and argue, and followed Florine to her room. Daylight surprised the party, or more accurately, the first dawn of light discovered one man still able to speak, and Blondet, that intrepid champion, was proposing to the assembled sleepers a health to Aurora the rosy-fingered.

Lucien was unaccustomed to orgies of this kind. His head was very tolerably clear as he came down the staircase, but the fresh air was too much for him; he was horribly drunk. When they reached the handsome house in the Rue de Vendôme, where the actress lived, Coralie and her waiting-woman were obliged to assist the poet to climb to the first floor. Lucien was ignominiously sick, and very nearly fainted on the staircase.

"Quick, Bérénice, some tea! Make some tea," cried Coralie.

"It is nothing; it is the air," Lucien got out, "and I have never taken so much before in my life."

"Poor boy! He is as innocent as a lamb," said Bérénice, a stalwart Norman peasant woman as ugly as Coralie was pretty. Lucien, half unconscious, was laid at last in bed. Coralie, with Bérénice's assistance, undressed the poet with all a mother's tender care.

"It is nothing," he murmured again and again. "It is the air. Thank you, mamma."

"How charmingly he says 'mamma,'" cried Coralie, putting a kiss on his hair.

"What happiness to love such an angel, mademoiselle! Where did you pick him up? I did not think a man could be as beautiful as you are," said Bérénice, when Lucien lay in bed. He was very drowsy; he knew nothing and saw nothing; Coralie made him swallow several cups of tea, and left him to sleep.

"Did the porter see us? Was there anyone else about?" she asked.



"No; I was sitting up for you."

"Does Victoire know anything?"

"Rather not!" returned Bérénice.

Ten hours later Lucien awoke to meet Coralie's eyes. She had watched by him as he slept; he knew it, poet that he was. It was almost noon, but she still wore the delicate dress, abominably stained, which she meant to lay up as a relic. Lucien understood all the self-sacrifice and delicacy of love, fain of its reward. He looked into Coralie's eyes. In a moment she had flung off her clothing and slipped like a serpent to Lucien's side.

At five o'clock in the afternoon Lucien was still sleeping, cradled in this voluptuous paradise. He had caught glimpses of Coralie's chamber, an exquisite creation of luxury, a world of rose-color and white. He had admired Florine's apartments, but this surpassed them in its dainty refinement.

Coralie had already risen; for if she was to play her part as the Andalusian, she must be at the theater by seven o'clock. Yet she had returned to gaze at the unconscious poet, lulled to sleep in bliss; she could not drink too deeply of this love that rose to rapture, drawing close the bond between the heart and the senses, to steep both in ecstasy. For in that apotheosis of human passion, which of those that were twain on earth that they might know bliss to the full creates one soul to rise to love in heaven, lay Coralie's justification. Who, moreover, would not have found excuse in Lucien's more than human beauty? To the actress kneeling by the bedside, happy in the love within her, it seemed that she had received love's consecration. Bérénice broke in upon Coralie's rapture.

"Here comes Camusot!" cried the maid. "And he knows that you are here."

Lucien sprang up at once. Innate generosity suggested that he was doing Coralie an injury. Bérénice drew aside a curtain, and he fled into a dainty dressing-room, whither Coralie and the maid brought his clothes with magical speed.

Camusot appeared, and only then did Coralie's eyes alight

on Lucien's boots, warming in the fender. Bérénice had privately varnished them, and put them before the fire to dry; and both mistress and maid alike forgot that tell-tale witness. Bérénice left the room with a scared glance at Coralie. Coralie flung herself into the depths of a settee, and bade Camusot seat himself in the *gondole*, a round-backed chair that stood opposite. But Coralie's adorer, honest soul, dared not look his mistress in the face; he could not take his eyes off the pair of boots.

"Ought I to make a scene and leave Coralie?" he pondered. "Is it worth while to make a fuss about a trifle? There is a pair of boots wherever you go. These would be more in place in a shop window or taking a walk on the boulevard on somebody's feet; here, however, without a pair of feet in them, they tell a pretty plain tale. I am fifty years old, and that is the truth; I ought to be as blind as Cupid himself."

There was no excuse for this mean-spirited monologue. The boots were not the high-lows at present in vogue, which an unobservant man may be allowed to disregard up to a certain point. They were the unmistakable, uncompromising hessians then prescribed by fashion, a pair of extremely elegant betasseled boots, which shone in glistening contrast against tight-fitting trousers invariably of some light color, and reflected their surroundings like a mirror. The boots stared the honest silk-mercier out of countenance, and, it must be added, they pained his heart.

"What is it?" asked Coralie.

"Nothing."

"Ring the bell," said Coralie, smiling to herself at Camusot's want of spirit.—"Bérénice," she said, when the Norman handmaid appeared, "just bring me a button-hook, for I must put on these confounded boots again. Don't forget to bring them to my dressing-room to-night."

"What? . . . *your* boots?" . . . faltered out Camusot, breathing more freely.

"And whose should they be?" she demanded haughtily. "Were you beginning to believe?—great stupid! Oh! and he would believe it too," she went on, addressing Bérénice.

—"I have a man's part in What's-his-name's piece, and I have never worn a man's clothes in my life before. The bootmaker for the theater brought me these things to try if I could walk in them, until a pair can be made to measure. He put them on, but they hurt me so much that I have taken them off, and after all I must wear them."

"Don't put them on again if they are uncomfortable," said Camusot. (The boots had made him feel so very uncomfortable himself.)

"Mademoiselle would do better to have a pair made of very thin morocco, sir, instead of torturing herself as she did just now; but the management is so stingy. She was crying, sir; if I was a man and loved a woman, I wouldn't let her shed a tear, I know. You ought to order a pair for her——"

"Yes, yes," said Camusot. "Are you just getting up, Coralie?"

"Just this moment; I only came in at six o'clock after looking for you everywhere. I was obliged to keep the cab for seven hours. So much for your care of me; you forget me for a wine-bottle. I ought to take care of myself now when I am to play every night so long as the *Alcalde* draws. I don't want to fall off after that young man's notice of me."

"That is a handsome boy," said Camusot.

"Do you think so? I don't admire men of that sort; they are too much like women; and they do not understand how to love like you stupid old business men. You are so bored with your own society."

"Is monsieur dining with madame?" inquired Bérénice.

"No, my mouth is clammy."

"You were nicely screwed yesterday. Ah! Papa Camusot, I don't like men who drink, I tell you at once——"

"You will give that young man a present, I suppose?" interrupted Camusot.

"Oh! yes. I would rather do that than pay as Florine does. There, go away with you, good-for-nothing that one loves; or give me a carriage to save time in future."

"You shall go in your own carriage to-morrow to your

manager's dinner at the Rocher de Cancale. The new piece will not be given next Sunday."

"Come, I am just going to dine," said Coralie, hurrying Camusot out of the room.

An hour later Bérénice came to release Lucien. Bérénice, Coralie's companion since her childhood, had a keen and subtle brain in her unwieldy frame.

"Stay here," she said. "Coralie is coming back alone; she even talked of getting rid of Camusot if he is in your way; but you are too much of an angel to ruin her, her heart's darling as you are. She wants to clear out of this, she says; to leave this paradise and go and live in your garret. Oh! there are those that are jealous and envious of you, and they have told her that you haven't a brass farthing, and live in the Latin Quarter; and I should go, too, you see, to do the housework.—But I have just been comforting her, poor child! I have been telling her that you were too clever to do anything so silly. I was right, wasn't I, sir? Oh! you will see that you are her darling, her love, the god to whom she gives her soul; yonder old fool has nothing but the body.—If you only knew how nice she is when I hear her say her part over! My Coralie, my little pet, she is! She deserved that God in heaven should send her one of His angels. She was sick of the life.—She was so unhappy with her mother that used to beat her, and sold her. Yes, sir, sold her own child! If I had a daughter, I would wait on her hand and foot as I wait on Coralie; she is like my own child to me.—These are the first good times she has seen since I have been with her; the first time that she has been really applauded. You have written something, it seems, and they have got up a famous *claque* for the second performance. Braulard has been going through the play with her while you were asleep."

"Who? Braulard?" asked Lucien; it seemed to him that he had heard the name before.

"He is the head of the *claqueurs*, and she was arranging with him the places where she wished him to look after her. Florine might try to play her some shabby trick, and take all for herself, for all she calls herself her friend. There

is such a talk about your article on the boulevards.—Isn't it a bed fit for a prince?" she said, smoothing the lace bed-spread.

She lighted the wax-candles, and to Lucien's bewildered fancy, the house seemed to be some palace in the Cabinet des Fées. Camusot had chosen the richest stuffs from the Golden Cocoon for the hangings and window-curtains. A carpet fit for a king's palace was spread upon the floor. The carving of the rosewood furniture caught and imprisoned the light that rippled over its surface. Priceless trifles gleamed from the white marble chimney-piece. The rug beside the bed was of swans' skins bordered with sable. A pair of little, black velvet slippers lined with purple silk told of happiness awaiting the poet of the *Marguerites*. A dainty lamp hung from the ceiling draped with silk. The room was full of flowering plants, delicate white heaths and scentless camellias, in stands marvelously wrought. Everything called up associations of innocence. How was it possible in these rooms to see the life that Coralie led in its true colors? Bérénice noticed Lucien's bewildered expression.

"Isn't it nice?" she said coaxingly. "You would be more comfortable here, wouldn't you, than in a garret?—You won't let her do anything rash?" she continued, setting a costly stand before him, covered with dishes abstracted from her mistress's dinner-table, lest the cook should suspect that her mistress had a lover in the house.

Lucien made a good dinner. Bérénice waited on him, the dishes were of wrought silver, the painted porcelain plates had cost a louis d'or apiece. The luxury was producing exactly the same effect upon him that the sight of a girl walking the pavement, with bare flaunting throat and neat ankles, produces upon a schoolboy.

"How lucky Camusot is!" cried he.

"Lucky?" repeated Bérénice. "He would willingly give all that he is worth to be in your place; he would be glad to barter his gray hair for your golden head."

She gave Lucien the richest wine that Bordeaux keeps for the wealthiest English purchaser, and persuaded Lucien to go to bed to take a preliminary nap; and Lucien, in

truth, was quite willing to sleep on the couch that he had been admiring. Bérénice had read his wish, and felt glad for her mistress.

At half-past ten that night Lucien awoke to look into eyes brimming over with love. There stood Coralie in most luxurious night attire. Lucien had been sleeping; Lucien was intoxicated with love, and not with wine. Bérénice left the room with the inquiry, "What time to-morrow morning?"

"At eleven o'clock. We will have breakfast in bed. I am not at home to anybody before two o'clock."

At two o'clock in the afternoon Coralie and her lover were sitting together. The poet to all appearance had come to pay a call. Lucien had been bathed and combed and dressed. Coralie had sent to Colliau's for a dozen fine shirts, a dozen cravats, and a dozen pocket-handkerchiefs for him, as well as twelve pairs of gloves in a cedar-wood box. When a carriage stopped at the door they both rushed to the window, and watched Camusot alight from a handsome coupé.

"I would not have believed that one could so hate a man and luxury——"

"I am too poor to allow you to ruin yourself for me," he replied. And thus Lucien passed under the Caudine Forks.

"Poor pet," said Coralie, holding him tightly to her, "do you love me so much?—I persuaded this gentleman to call on me this morning," she continued, indicating Lucien to Camusot, who entered the room. "I thought that we might take a drive in the Champs-Élysées to try the carriage."

"Go without me," said Camusot in a melancholy voice; "I shall not dine with you. It is my wife's birthday, I had forgotten that."

"Poor Musot, how badly bored you will be!" she said, putting her arms about his neck.

She was wild with joy at the thought that she and Lucien would handsel this gift together; she would drive with him in the new carriage; and in her happiness, she seemed to love Camusot, she lavished caresses upon him.

"If only I could give you a carriage every day!" said the poor fellow.

"Now, sir, it is two o'clock," she said, turning to Lucien, who stood in distress and confusion, but she comforted him with an adorable gesture.

Down the stairs she went, several steps at a time, drawing Lucien after her; the elderly merchant following in their wake like a seal on land, and quite unable to catch them up.

Lucien enjoyed the most intoxicating of pleasures; happiness had increased Coralie's loveliness to the highest possible degree; she appeared before all eyes an exquisite vision in her dainty toilette. All Paris in the Champs-Élysées beheld the lovers.

In an avenue of the Bois de Boulogne they met a calèche; Mme. d'Espard and Mme. de Bargeton looked in surprise at Lucien, and met a scornful glance from the poet. He saw glimpses of a great future before him, and was about to make his power felt. He could fling them back in a glance some of the revengeful thoughts which had gnawed his heart ever since they planted them there. That moment was one of the sweetest in his life, and perhaps decided his fate. Once again the Furies seized on Lucien at the bidding of Pride. He would reappear in the world of Paris; he would take a signal revenge; all the social pettiness hitherto trodden under foot by the worker, the member of the brotherhood, sprang up again afresh in his soul.

Now he understood all that Lousteau's attack had meant. Lousteau had served his passions; while the brotherhood, that collective mentor, had seemed to mortify them in the interests of tiresome virtues and work which began to look useless and hopeless in Lucien's eyes. Work! What is it but death to an eager pleasure-loving nature? And how easy it is for the man of letters to slide into a *far niente* existence of self-indulgence, into the luxurious ways of actresses and women of easy virtue! Lucien felt an overmastering desire to continue the reckless life of the last two days.

The dinner at the Rocher de Cancale was exquisite. All Florine's supper guests were there except the Minister, the

Duke, and the dancer; Camusot, too, was absent; but these gaps were filled by two famous actors and Hector Merlin and his mistress. This charming woman, who chose to be known as Mme. du Val-Noble, was the handsomest and most fashionable of the class of women now euphemistically styled *lorettes*.

Lucien had spent the forty-eight hours since the success of his article in paradise. He was fêted and envied; he gained self-possession; his talk sparkled; he was the brilliant Lucien de Rubempré who shone for a few months in the world of letters and art. Finot, with his infallible instinct for discovering ability, scenting it afar as an ogre might scent human flesh, cajoled Lucien, and did his best to secure a recruit for the squadron under his command. And Coralie watched the maneuvers of this purveyor of brains, saw that Lucien was nibbling at the bait, and tried to put him on his guard.

"Don't make any engagement, dear boy; wait. They want to exploit you; we will talk of it to-night."

"Pshaw!" said Lucien. "I am sure I am quite as sharp and shrewd as they can be."

Finot and Hector Merlin evidently had not fallen out over that affair of the white lines and spaces in the columns, for it was Finot who introduced Lucien to the journalist. Coralie and Mme. du Val-Noble were overwhelmingly amiable and polite to each other, and Mme. du Val-Noble asked Lucien and Coralie to dine with her.

Hector Merlin, short and thin, with lips always tightly compressed, was the most dangerous journalist present. Unbounded ambition and jealousy smoldered within him; he took pleasure in the pain of others, and fomented strife to turn it to his own account. His abilities were but slender, and he had little force of character; but the natural instinct which draws the upstart towards money and power served him as well as fixity of purpose. Lucien and Merlin at once took a dislike to one another, for reasons not far to seek. Merlin, unfortunately, proclaimed aloud the thoughts that Lucien kept to himself. By the time the dessert was put on the table, the most touching friendship appeared



to prevail among the men, each one of whom in his heart thought himself a cleverer fellow than the rest; and Lucien as the newcomer was made much of by them all. They chatted frankly and unrestrainedly. Hector Merlin, alone, did not join in the laughter. Lucien asked the reason of his reserve.

"You are just entering the world of letters, I can see," he said; "you are a journalist with all your illusions left. You believe in friendship. Here we are friends or foes, as it happens; we strike down a friend with the weapon which by rights should only be turned against an enemy. You will find out, before very long, that fine sentiments will do nothing for you. If you are naturally kindly, learn to be ill-natured, to be consistently spiteful. If you have never heard this golden rule before, I give it you now in confidence, and it is no small secret. If you have a mind to be loved, never leave your mistress until you have made her shed a tear or two; and if you mean to make your way in literature, let other people continually feel your teeth; make no exception even of your friends; wound their susceptibilities, and everybody will fawn upon you."

Hector Merlin watched Lucien as he spoke, saw that his words went to the neophyte's heart like a stab, and Hector Merlin was glad. Play followed, Lucien lost all his money, and Coralie brought him away; and he forgot for a while, in the delights of love, the fierce excitement of the gambler, which was to gain so strong a hold upon him.

When he left Coralie in the morning and returned to the Latin Quarter, he took out his purse and found the money he had lost. At first he felt miserable over the discovery, and thought of going back at once to return a gift which humiliated him; but—he had already come as far as the Rue de la Harpe; he would not return now that he had almost reached the Hôtel de Cluny. He pondered over Coralie's forethought as he went, till he saw in it a proof of the maternal love which is blended with passion in women of her stamp. For Coralie and her like, passion includes every human affection. Lucien went from thought to thought, and argued himself into accepting the gift. "I

love her," he said; "we shall live together as husband and wife; I will never forsake her!"

What mortal, short of a Diogenes, could fail to understand Lucien's feelings as he climbed the dirty fetid staircase to his lodging, turned the key that grated in the lock, and entered and looked round at the unswept brick floor, at the cheerless grate, at the ugly poverty and bareness of the room.

A package of manuscript was lying on the table. It was his novel; a note from Daniel d'Arthez lay beside it:

"Our friends are almost satisfied with your work, dear poet," d'Arthez wrote. "You will be able to present it with more confidence now, they say, to friends and enemies. We saw your charming article on the *Panorama-Dramatique*; you are sure to excite as much jealousy in the profession as regret among your friends here. DANIEL."

"Regrets! What does he mean?" exclaimed Lucien. The polite tone of the note astonished him. Was he to be henceforth a stranger to the brotherhood? He had learned to set a higher value on the good opinion and the friendship of the circle in the Rue des Quatre-Vents since he had tasted of the delicious fruits offered to him by the Eve of the theatrical underworld. For some moments he stood in deep thought; he saw his present in the garret, and foresaw his future in Coralie's rooms. Honorable resolution struggled with temptation and swayed him now this way, now that. He sat down and began to look through his manuscript, to see in what condition his friends had returned it to him. What was his amazement, as he read chapter after chapter, to find his poverty transmuted into riches by the cunning of the pen, and the devotion of the unknown great men, his friends of the brotherhood. Dialogue, closely packed, nervous, pregnant, terse, and full of the spirit of the age, replaced his conversations, which seemed poor and pointless prattle in comparison. His characters, a little uncertain in the drawing, now stood out in vigorous contrast of color and relief; physiological observa-

tions, due no doubt to Horace Bianchon, supplied links of interpretation between human character and the curious phenomena of human life—subtle touches which made his men and women live. His wordy passages of description were condensed and vivid. The misshapen, ill-clad child of his brain had returned to him as a lovely maiden, with white robes and rosy-hued girdle and scarf—an entrancing creation. Night fell and took him by surprise, reading through rising tears, stricken to earth by such greatness of soul, feeling the worth of such a lesson, admiring the alterations, which taught him more of literature and art than all his four years' apprenticeship of study and reading and comparison. A master's correction of a line made upon the study always teaches more than all the theories and criticisms in the world.

"What friends are these! What hearts! How fortunate I am!" he cried, grasping his manuscript tightly.

With the quick impulsiveness of a poetic and mobile temperament, he rushed off to Daniel's lodging. As he climbed the stairs, and thought of these friends, who refused to leave the path of honor, he felt conscious that he was less worthy of them than before. A voice spoke within him, telling him that if d'Arthez had loved Coralie, he would have had her break with Camusot. And, besides this, he knew that the brotherhood held journalism in utter abhorrence, and that he himself was already, to some small extent, a journalist. All of them, except Meyraux, who had just gone out, were in d'Arthez's room when he entered it, and saw that all their faces were full of sorrow and despair.

"What is it?" he cried.

"We have just heard news of a dreadful catastrophe; the greatest thinker of the age, our most loved friend, who was like a light among us for two years——"

"Louis Lambert!"

"Has fallen a victim to catalepsy. There is no hope for him," said Bianchon.

"He will die, his soul wandering in the skies, his body unconscious on earth," said Michel Chrestien solemnly.

"He will die as he lived," said d'Arthez.

"Love fell like a firebrand in the vast empire of his brain and burned him away," said Léon Giraud.

"Yes," said Joseph Bridau, "he has reached a height that we cannot so much as see."

"We are to be pitied, not Louis," said Fulgence Ridal.

"Perhaps he will recover," exclaimed Lucien.

"From what Meyraux has been telling us, recovery seems impossible," answered Bianchon. "Medicine has no power over the change that is working in his brain."

"Yet there are physical means," said d'Arthez.

"Yes," said Bianchon; "we might produce imbecility instead of catalepsy."

"Is there no way of offering another head to the spirit of evil? I would give mine to save him!" cried Michel Chrestien.

"And what would become of European federation?" asked d'Arthez.

"Ah! true," replied Michel Chrestien. "Our duty to Humanity comes first; to one man afterwards."

"I came here with a heart full of gratitude to you all," said Lucien. "You have changed my alloy into golden coin."

"Gratitude! For what do you take us?" asked Bianchon.

"We had the pleasure," added Fulgence.

"Well; so you are a journalist, are you?" asked Léon Giraud. "The fame of your first appearance has reached even the Latin Quarter."

"I am not a journalist yet," returned Lucien.

"Aha! So much the better," said Michel Chrestien.

"I told you so!" said d'Arthez. "Lucien knows the value of a clean conscience. When you can say to yourself as you lay your head on the pillow at night, 'I have not sat in judgment on another man's work; I have given pain to no one; I have not used the edge of my wit to deal a stab to some harmless soul; I have sacrificed no one's success to a jest; I have not even troubled the happiness of imbecility; I have not added to the burdens of genius; I have scorned the easy triumphs of epigram; in short, I have

not acted against my convictions,' is not this a viaticum that gives one daily strength?"

"But one can say all this, surely, and yet work on a newspaper," said Lucien. "If I had absolutely no other way of earning a living, I should certainly come to this."

"Oh! oh! oh!" cried Fulgence, his voice rising a note each time; "we are capitulating, are we?"

"He will turn journalist," Léon Giraud said gravely. "Oh, Lucien, if you would only stay and work with us! We are about to bring out a periodical in which justice and truth shall never be violated; we will spread doctrines that, perhaps, will be of real service to mankind——"

"You will not have a single subscriber," Lucien broke in with Machiavellian wisdom.

"There will be five hundred of them," asserted Michel Chrestien, "but they will be worth five hundred thousand."

"You will need a lot of capital," continued Lucien.

"No, only devotion," said d'Arthez.

"Anybody might take him for a perfumer's assistant," burst out Michel Chrestien, looking at Lucien's head, and sniffing comically. "You were seen driving about in a very smart turnout with a pair of thoroughbreds, and a mistress for a prince, Coralie herself."

"Well, and is there any harm in it?"

"You would not say that if you thought that there was no harm in it," said Bianchon.

"I could have wished Lucien a Beatrice," said d'Arthez, "a noble woman, who would have been a help to him in life——"

"But, Daniel," asked Lucien, "love is love wherever you find it, is it not?"

"Ah!" said the republican member, "on that one point I am an aristocrat. I could not bring myself to love a woman who must rub shoulders with all sorts of people in the greenroom; whom an actor kisses on the stage; she must lower herself before the public, smile on everyone, lift her skirt as she dances, and dress like a man, that all the world may see what none should see save I alone. Or if I loved

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such a woman, she should leave the stage, and my love should cleanse her from the stain of it."

"And if she would not leave the stage?"

"I should die of mortification, jealousy, and all sorts of pain. You cannot pluck love out of your heart as you draw a tooth."

Lucien's face grew dark and thoughtful.

"When they find out that I am tolerating Camusot, how they will despise me," he thought.

"Look here," said the fierce republican, with humorous fierceness, "you can be a great writer, but a little play-actor you shall never be," and he took up his hat and went out.

"He is hard, is Michel Chrestien," commented Lucien.

"Hard and salutary, like the dentist's pincers," said Bianchon. "Michel foresees your future; perhaps in the street, at this moment, he is thinking of you with tears in his eyes."

D'Arthez was kind, and talked comfortingly, and tried to cheer Lucien. The poet spent an hour with his friends, then he went, but his conscience treated him hardly, crying to him, "You will be a journalist—a journalist!" as the witch cried to Macbeth that he should be king hereafter!

Out in the street, he looked up at d'Arthez's windows, and saw a faint light shining in them, and his heart sank. A dim foreboding told him that he had bidden his friends good-by for the last time.

As he turned out of the Place de la Sorbonne into the Rue de Cluny, he saw a carriage at the door of his lodging. Coralie had driven all the way from the Boulevard du Temple for the sake of a moment with her lover and a "good-night." Lucien found her sobbing in his garret. She would be as wretchedly poor as her poet, she wept, as she arranged his shirts and gloves and handkerchiefs in the crazy chest of drawers. Her distress was so real and so great, that Lucien, but even now chidden for his connection with an actress, saw Coralie as a saint ready to assume the hair-shirt of poverty. The adorable girl's excuse for her visit was an announcement that the firm of Camusot, Coralie, and Lucien

meant to invite Matifat, Florine, and Lousteau (the second trio) to supper; had Lucien any invitations to issue to people who might be useful to him? Lucien said that he would take counsel of Lousteau.

A few moments were spent together, and Coralie hurried away. She spared Lucien the knowledge that Camusot was waiting for her below.

Next morning, at eight o'clock, Lucien went to Étienne Lousteau's room, found it empty, and hurried away to Florine. Lousteau and Florine, settled into possession of their new quarters like a married couple, received their friend in the pretty bedroom, and all three breakfasted sumptuously together.

"Why, I should advise you, my boy, to come with me to see Félicien Vernou," said Lousteau, when they sat at table, and Lucien had mentioned Coralie's projected supper; "ask him to be of the party, and keep well with him, if you can keep well with such a rascal. Félicien Vernou does a *feuilleton* for a political paper; he might perhaps introduce you, and you could blossom out into leaders in it at your ease. It is a Liberal paper, like ours; you will be a Liberal, that is the popular party; and besides, if you mean to go over to the Ministerialists, you would do better for yourself if they had reason to be afraid of you. Then there is Hector Merlin and his Mme. du Val-Noble; you meet great people at their house—dukes and dandies and millionaires; didn't they ask you and Coralie to dine with them?"

"Yes," replied Lucien; "you are going too, and so is Florine." Lucien and Étienne were now on familiar terms after Friday's debauch and the dinner at the Rocher de Cancale.

"Very well, Merlin is on the paper; we shall come across him pretty often; he is the chap to follow close on Finot's heels. You would do well to pay him attention; ask him and Mme. du Val-Noble to supper. He may be useful to you before long; for rancorous people are always in need of others, and he may do you a good turn if he can reckon on your pen."

"Your beginning has made enough sensation to smooth

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your way," said Florine; "take advantage of it at once, or you will soon be forgotten."

"The bargain, the great business, is concluded," Lousteau continued. "That Finot, without a spark of talent in him, is to be editor of Dauriat's weekly paper, with a salary of six hundred francs per month, and owner of a sixth share, for which he has not paid one penny. And I, my dear fellow, am now editor of our little paper. Everything went off as I expected; Florine managed superbly, she could give points to Talleyrand himself."

"We have a hold on men through their pleasures," said Florine, "while a diplomatist only works on their self-love. A diplomatist sees a man made up for the occasion; we know him in his moments of folly, so our power is greater."

"And when the thing was settled, Matifat made the first and last joke of his whole druggist's career," put in Lousteau. "He said, 'This affair is quite in my line; I am supplying drugs to the public.'"

"I suspect that Florine put him up to it," cried Lucien.

"And by these means, my little dear, your foot is in the stirrup," continued Lousteau.

"You were born with a silver spoon in your mouth," remarked Florine. "What lots of young fellows wait for years, wait till they are sick of waiting, for a chance to get an article into a paper! You will do like Émile Blondet. In six months' time you will be giving yourself high and mighty airs," she added, with a mocking smile, in the language of her class.

"Haven't I been in Paris for three years?" said Lousteau, "and only yesterday Finot began to pay me a fixed monthly salary of three hundred francs, and a hundred francs per sheet for his paper."

"Well; you are saying nothing!" exclaimed Florine, with her eyes turned on Lucien.

"We shall see," said Lucien.

"My dear boy, if you had been my brother, I could not have done more for you," retorted Lousteau, somewhat nettled, "but I won't answer for Finot. Scores of sharp fellows will besiege Finot for the next two days with offers to



work for low pay. I have promised for you, but you can draw back if you like.—You little know how lucky you are,” he added after a pause. “All those in our set combine to attack an enemy in various papers, and lend each other a helping hand all round.”

“Let us go in the first place to Félicien Vernou,” said Lucien. He was eager to conclude an alliance with such formidable birds of prey.

Lousteau sent for a cab, and the pair of friends drove to Vernou’s house on a second floor up an alley in the Rue Mandar. To Lucien’s great astonishment, the harsh, fastidious, and severe critic’s surroundings were vulgar to the last degree. A marbled paper, cheap and shabby, with a meaningless pattern repeated at regular intervals, covered the walls, and a series of aqua tints in gilt frames decorated the apartment, where Vernou sat at table with a woman so plain that she could only be the legitimate mistress of the house, and two very small children perched on high chairs with a bar in front to prevent the infants from tumbling out. Félicien Vernou, in a cotton dressing-gown contrived out of the remains of one of his wife’s dresses, was not over well pleased by this invasion.

“Have you breakfasted, Lousteau?” he asked, placing a chair for Lucien.

“We have just left Florine; we have been breakfasting with her.”

Lucien could not take his eyes off Mme. Vernou. She looked like a stout, homely cook, with a tolerably fair complexion, but commonplace to the last degree. The lady wore a bandanna tied over her night-cap, the strings of the latter article of dress being tied so tightly under the chin that her puffy cheeks stood out on either side. A shapeless, beltless garment, fastened by a single button at the throat, enveloped her from head to foot in such a fashion that a comparison to a milestone at once suggested itself. Her health left no room for hope; her cheeks were almost purple; her fingers looked like sausages. In a moment it dawned upon Lucien how it was that Vernou was always so ill at ease in society; here was the living explanation of

his misanthropy. Sick of his marriage, unable to bring himself to abandon his wife and family, he had yet sufficient of the artistic temper to suffer continually from their presence; Vernou was an actor by nature bound never to pardon the success of another, condemned to chronic discontent because he was never content with himself. Lucien began to understand the sour look which seemed to add to the bleak expression of envy on Vernou's face; the acerbity of the epigrams with which his conversation was sown, the journalist's pungent phrases, keen and elaborately wrought as a stiletto, were at once explained.

"Let us go into my study," Vernou said, rising from the table; "you have come on business, no doubt?"

"Yes and no," replied Étienne Lousteau. "It is a supper, old chap."

"I have brought a message from Coralie," said Lucien (Mme. Vernou looked up at once at the name), "to ask you to supper to-night at her house to meet the same company as before at Florine's, and a few more besides—Hector Merlin and Mme. du Val-Noble and some others. There will be play afterwards."

"But we are engaged to Mme. Mahoudeau this evening, dear," put in the wife.

"What does that matter?" returned Vernou.

"She will take offense if we don't go; and you are very glad of her when you have a bill to discount."

"This wife of mine, my dear boy, can never be made to understand that a supper engagement for twelve o'clock does not prevent you from going to an evening party that comes to an end at eleven. She is always with me while I work," he added.

"You have so much imagination!" said Lucien, and thereby made a mortal enemy of Vernou.

"Well," continued Lousteau, "you are coming; but that is not all. M. de Rubempré is about to be one of us, so you must push him in your paper. Give him out for a chap that will make a name for himself in literature, so that he can put in at least a couple of articles every month."

"Yes, if he means to be one of us, and will attack our

enemies, as we will attack his, I will say a word for him at the Opéra to-night," replied Vernou.

"Very well—good-by till to-morrow, my boy," said Lousteau, shaking hands with every sign of cordiality. "When is your book coming out?"

"That depends on Dauriat; it is ready," said Vernou paterfamilias.

"Are you satisfied?"

"Yes and no——"

"We will get up a success," said Lousteau, and he rose with a bow to his colleague's wife.

The abrupt departure was necessary indeed; for the two infants, engaged in a noisy quarrel, were fighting with their spoons and flinging the pap in each other's faces.

"That, my boy, is a woman who all unconsciously will work great havoc in contemporary literature," said Étienne, when they came away. "Poor Vernou cannot forgive us for his wife. He ought to be relieved of her in the interests of the public; and a deluge of bloodthirsty reviews and stinging sarcasms against successful men of every sort would be averted. What is to become of a man with such a wife and that pair of abominable brats? Have you seen Rigaudin in Picard's *La Maison en Loterie*? You have? Well, like Rigaudin, Vernou will not fight himself, but he will set others fighting; he would give an eye to put out both eyes in the head of the best friend he has. You will see him using the bodies of the slain for a stepping-stone, rejoicing over everyone's misfortunes, attacking princes, dukes, marquises, and nobles, because he himself is a commoner; reviling the work of unmarried men because he forsooth has a wife; and everlastingly preaching morality, the joys of domestic life, and the duties of the citizen. In short, this very moral critic will spare no one, not even infants of tender age. He lives in the Rue Mandar with a wife who might be the *Mamamouchi* of the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and a couple of little Vernous as ugly as sin. He tries to sneer at the Faubourg Saint-Germain, where he will never set foot, and makes his duchesses talk like his wife. That is the sort of man to raise a howl at the Jesuits, insult the Court, and

credit the Court party with the design of restoring feudal rights and the right of primogeniture—just the one to preach a crusade for Equality, he that thinks himself the equal of no one. If he were a bachelor, he would go into society; if he were in a fair way to be a Royalist poet with a pension and the Cross of the Legion of Honor, he would be an optimist, and journalism offers starting-points by the hundred. Journalism is a giant catapult set in motion by pygmy hatreds. Have you any wish to marry after this? Vernou has none of the milk of human kindness in him, it is all turned to gall; and he is emphatically the Journalist, a tiger with two hands that tears everything to pieces, as if his pen had the hydrophobia.”

“It is a case of gunophobia,” said Lucien. “Has he ability?”

“He is witty, he is a writer of articles. He incubates articles; he does that all his life and nothing else. The most dogged industry would fail to graft a book on his prose. Félicien is incapable of conceiving a work on a larger scale, of broad effects, of fitting characters harmoniously in a plot which develops till it reaches a climax. He has ideas, but he has no knowledge of facts; his heroes are utopian creatures, philosophical or Liberal notions masquerading. He is at pains to write an original style, but his inflated periods would collapse at a pin-prick from a critic; and therefore he goes in terror of reviews, like everyone else who can only keep his head above water with the bladders of newspaper puffs.”

“What an article you are making out of him!”

“That particular kind, my boy, must be spoken, and never written.”

“You are turning editor,” said Lucien.

“Where shall I put you down?”

“At Coralie’s.”

“Ah! we are infatuated,” said Lousteau. “What a mistake! Do as I do with Florine, let Coralie be your house-keeper, and take your fling.”

“You would send a saint to perdition,” laughed Lucien.

“Well, there is no damning a devil,” retorted Lousteau.

The flippant tone, the brilliant talk of this new friend, his views of life, his paradoxes, the axioms of Parisian Machiavelism,—all these things impressed Lucien unawares. Theoretically the poet knew that such thoughts were perilous; but he believed them practically useful.

Arrived in the Boulevard du Temple, the friends agreed to meet at the office between four and five o'clock. Hector Merlin would doubtless be there. Lousteau was right. The infatuation of desire was upon Lucien; for the courtesan who loves knows how to grapple her lover to her by every weakness in his nature, fashioning herself with incredible flexibility to his every wish, encouraging the soft, effeminate habits which strengthen her hold. Lucien was thirsting already for enjoyment; he was in love with the easy, luxurious, and expensive life which the actress led.

He found Coralie and Camusot intoxicated with joy. The Gymnase offered Coralie an engagement after Easter on terms for which she had never dared to hope.

"And this great success is owing to you," said Camusot.

"Yes, surely. *The Alcalde* would have fallen flat but for him," cried Coralie; "if there had been no article, I should have been in for another six years of the boulevard theaters."

She danced up to Lucien and flung her arms round him, putting an indescribable silken softness and sweetness into her enthusiasm. Love had come to Coralie. And Camusot? his eyes fell. Looking down after the wont of mankind in moments of sharp pain, he saw the seam of Lucien's boots, a deep yellow thread used by the best bootmakers of that time, in strong contrast with the glistening leather. The color of that seam had tinged his thoughts during a previous conversation with himself, as he sought to explain the presence of a mysterious pair of hessians in Coralie's fender. He remembered now that he had seen the name of "*Gay, Rue de la Michodière*," printed in black letters on the soft white kid lining.

"You have a handsome pair of boots, sir," he said.

"Like everything else about him," said Coralie.

"I should be very glad of your bootmaker's address."

"Oh, how like the Rue des Bourdonnais to ask for a

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tradesman's address," cried Coralie. "Do *you* intend to patronize a young man's bootmaker? A nice young man you would make! So keep to your own topboots; they are the kind for a steady-going man with a wife and family and a mistress."

"Indeed, if you would take off one of your boots, sir, I should be very much obliged," persisted Camusot.

"I could not get it on again without a button-hook," said Lucien, flushing up.

"Bérénice will fetch you one; we can do with some here," jeered Camusot.

"Papa Camusot!" said Coralie, looking at him with cruel scorn, "have the courage of your pitiful baseness. Come, speak out! You think that this gentleman's boots are very like mine, do you not?—I forbid you to take off your boots," she added, turning to Lucien.—"Yes, M. Camusot. Yes, you saw some boots lying about in the fender here the other day, and that is the identical pair, and this gentleman was hiding in my dressing-room at the time, waiting for them; and he had passed the night here. That was what you were thinking, *hein?* Think so; I would rather you did. It is the simple truth. I am deceiving you. And if I am? I do it to please myself."

She sat down. There was no anger in her face, no embarrassment; she looked from Camusot to Lucien. The two men avoided each other's eyes.

"I will believe nothing that you do not wish me to believe," said Camusot. "Don't play with me, Coralie; I was wrong——"

"I am either a shameless baggage that has taken a sudden fancy; or a poor, unhappy girl who feels what love really is for the first time, the love that all women long for. And whichever way it is, you must leave me or take me as I am," she said, with a queenly gesture that crushed Camusot.

"Is it really true?" he asked, seeing from their faces that this was no jest, yet begging to be deceived.

"I love mademoiselle," Lucien faltered out.

At that word, Coralie sprang to her poet and held him tightly to her; then, with her arms still about him, she turned

to the silk-mercier, as if to bid him see the beautiful picture made by two young lovers.

"Poor Musot, take all that you gave to me back again; I do not want to keep anything of yours; for I love this boy here madly, not for his intellect, but for his beauty. I would rather starve with him than have millions with you."

Camusot sank into a low chair, hid his face in his hands, and said not a word.

"Would you like us to go away?" she asked. There was a note of ferocity in her voice which no words can describe.

Cold chills ran down Lucien's spine; he beheld himself burdened with a woman, an actress, and a household.

"Stay here, Coralie; keep it all," the old tradesman said at last, in a faint, unsteady voice that came from his heart; "I don't want anything back. There is the worth of sixty thousand francs here in the furniture; but I could not bear to think of my Coralie in want. And yet, it will not be long before you come to want. However great this gentleman's talent may be, he can't afford to keep you. We old fellows must expect this sort of thing. Coralie, let me come and see you sometimes; I may be of use to you. And—I confess it; I cannot live without you."

The poor man's gentleness, stripped as he was of his happiness just as happiness had reached its height, touched Lucien deeply. Coralie was quite unsoftened by it.

"Come as often as you wish, poor Musot," she said; "I shall like you all the better when I don't pretend to love you."

Camusot seemed to be resigned to his fate so long as he was not driven out of the earthly paradise, in which his life could not have been all joy; he trusted to the chances of life in Paris and to the temptations that would beset Lucien's path; he would wait a while, and all that had been his should be his again. Sooner or later, thought the wily tradesman, this handsome young fellow would be unfaithful; he would keep a watch on him; and the better to do this and use his opportunity with Coralie, he would be their friend.

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The persistent passion that could consent to such humiliation terrified Lucien. Camusot's proposal of a dinner at Véry's in the Palais Royal was accepted.

"What joy!" cried Coralie, as soon as Camusot had departed. "You will not go back now to your garret in the Latin Quarter; you will live here. We shall always be together. You can take a room in the Rue Charlot for the sake of appearances, and *vogue la galère!*"

She began to dance her Spanish dance, with an excited eagerness that revealed the strength of the passion in her heart.

"If I work hard, I may make five hundred francs a month," Lucien said.

"And I shall make as much again at the theater, without counting extras. Camusot will pay for my dresses as before. He is fond of me! We can live like Cræsus on fifteen hundred francs a month."

"And the horses? and the coachman? and the footman?" inquired Bérénice.

"I will get into debt," said Coralie. And she began to dance with Lucien.

"I must close with Finot after this," Lucien exclaimed.

"There!" said Coralie, "I will dress and take you to your office. I will wait outside in the boulevard for you with the carriage."

Lucien sat down on the sofa and made some very sober reflections as he watched Coralie at her toilette. It would have been wiser to leave Coralie free than to start all at once with such an establishment; but Coralie was there before his eyes, and Coralie was so lovely, so graceful, so bewitching, that the more picturesque aspects of bohemia were in evidence; and he flung down the gauntlet to fortune.

Bérénice was ordered to superintend Lucien's removal and installation; and Coralie, triumphant, radiant, and happy, carried off her love, her poet, and must needs go all over Paris on the way to the Rue Saint-Fiacre. Lucien sprang lightly up the staircase, and entered the office with an air of being quite at home. Coloquinte was there with the stamped paper still on his head; and old Giroudeau told



him again, hypocritically enough, that no one had yet come in.

"But the editor and contributors *must* meet somewhere or other to arrange about the journal," said Lucien.

"Very likely; but I have nothing to do with the writing of the paper," said the Emperor's captain, resuming his occupation of checking off wrappers with his eternal *broum! broum!*

Was it lucky or unlucky? Finot chanced to come in at that very moment to announce his sham abdication and to bid Giroudeau watch over his interests.

"No shilly-shally with this gentleman; he is on the staff," Finot added for his uncle's benefit, as he grasped Lucien by the hand.

"Oh! is he on the paper?" exclaimed Giroudeau, much surprised at this friendliness. "Well, sir, you came on without much difficulty."

"I want to make things snug for you here, lest Étienne should bamboozle you," continued Finot, looking knowingly at Lucien. "This gentleman will be paid three francs per column all round, including theaters."

"You have never taken anyone on such terms before," said Giroudeau, opening his eyes.

"And he will take the four boulevard theaters. See that nobody sneaks his boxes, and that he gets his share of tickets. —I should advise you, nevertheless, to have them sent to your address," he added, turning to Lucien. —"And he agrees to write besides ten miscellaneous articles of two columns each, for fifty francs per month, for one year. Does that suit you?"

"Yes," said Lucien. Circumstances had forced his hand.

"Draw up the agreement, uncle, and we will sign it when we come downstairs."

"Who is the gentleman?" inquired Giroudeau, rising and taking off his black silk skull-cap.

"M. Lucien de Rubempré, who wrote the article on *The Alcalde*."

"Young man, you have a gold mine *there*," said the old soldier, tapping Lucien on the forehead. "I am not literary

myself, but I read that article of yours, and I liked it. That is the kind of thing! There's gayety for you! 'That will bring us new subscribers,' says I to myself. And so it did. We sold fifty more numbers."

"Is my agreement with Lousteau made out in duplicate and ready to sign?" asked Finot, speaking aside.

"Yes."

"Then ante-date this gentleman's agreement by one day, so that Lousteau will be bound by the previous contract."

Finot took his new contributor's arm with a friendliness that charmed Lucien, and drew him out on the landing to say—

"Your position is made for you. I will introduce you to *my* staff myself, and to-night Lousteau will go round with you to the theaters. You can make a hundred and fifty francs per month on this little paper of ours with Lousteau as its editor, so try to keep well with him. The rogue bears a grudge against me as it is, for tying his hands so far as you are concerned; but you have ability, and I don't choose that you shall be subjected to the whims of the editor. You might let me have a couple of sheets every month for my review, and I will pay you two hundred francs. This is between ourselves, don't mention it to anybody else; I should be laid open to the spite of everyone whose vanity is mortified by your good fortune. Write four articles, fill your two sheets, sign two with your own name, and two with a pseudonym, so that you may not seem to be taking the bread out of anybody else's mouth. You owe your position to Blondet and Vignon; they think that you have a future before you. So keep out of scrapes, and, above all things, be on your guard against your friends. As for us, we shall always get on well together, you and I. Help me, and I will help you. You have forty francs' worth of boxes and tickets to sell, and sixty francs' worth of books to convert into cash. With that and your work on the paper, you will be making four hundred and fifty francs every month. If you use your wits, you will find ways of making another two hundred francs at least among the publishers; they will pay you for reviews and prospectuses.

But you are mine, are you not? I can count upon you."

Lucien squeezed Finot's hand in transports of joy which no words can express.

"Don't let anyone see that anything has passed between us," said Finot in his ear, and he flung open a door of a room in the roof at the end of a long passage on the fifth floor.

A table covered with a green cloth was drawn up to a blazing fire, and seated in various chairs and lounges Lucien discovered Lousteau, Félicien Vernou, Hector Merlin, and two others unknown to him, all laughing or smoking. A real inkstand, full of ink this time, stood on the table among a great litter of papers; while a collection of pens, the worse for wear, but still serviceable for journalists, told the new contributor very plainly that the mighty enterprise was carried on in this apartment.

"Gentlemen," said Finot, "the object of this gathering is the installation of our friend Lousteau in my place as editor of the newspaper which I am compelled to relinquish. But although my opinions will necessarily undergo a transformation when I accept the editorship of a review of which the politics are known to you, my *convictions* remain the same, and we shall be friends as before. I am quite at your service, and you likewise will be ready to do anything for me. Circumstances change; principles are fixed. Principles are the pivot on which the hands of the political barometer turn."

There was an instant shout of laughter.

"Who put that into your mouth?" asked Lousteau.

"Blondet!" said Finot.

"Windy, showery, stormy, settled fair," said Merlin; "we will all row in the same boat."

"In short," continued Finot, "not to muddle our wits with metaphors, anyone who has an article or two for me will always find Finot.—This gentleman," turning to Lucien, "will be one of you.—I have arranged with him, Lousteau."

Everyone congratulated Finot on his advance and new prospects.

"So there you are, mounted on our shoulders," said a contributor whom Lucien did not know. "You will be the Janus of Journal——"

"So long as he isn't the Janot," put in Vernou.

"Are you going to allow us to make attacks on our *bêtes noires*?"

"Anyone you like."

"Ah, yes!" said Lousteau; "but the paper must keep on its lines. M. Châtelet is very wroth; we shall not let him off for a week yet."

"What has happened?" asked Lucien.

"He came here to ask for an explanation," said Vernou. "The Imperial buck found old Giroudeau at home; and old Giroudeau told him, with all the coolness in the world, that Philippe Bridau wrote the article. Philippe asked the Baron to mention the time and the weapons, and there it ended. We are engaged at this moment in offering excuses to the Baron in to-morrow's issue. Every phrase is a stab for him."

"Keep your teeth in him and he will come round to me," said Finot; "and it will look as if I were obliging him by appeasing you. He can say a word to the Ministry, and we can get something or other out of him—an assistant schoolmaster's place, or a tobacconist's license. It is a lucky thing for us that we flicked him on the raw. Does anybody here care to take a serious article on Nathan for my new paper?"

"Give it to Lucien," said Lousteau. "Hector and Vernou will write articles in their papers at the same time."

"Good-day, gentlemen; we shall meet each other face to face at Barbin's," said Finot, laughing.

Lucien received some congratulations on his admission to the mighty army of journalists, and Lousteau explained that they could be sure of him. "Lucien wants you all to sup in a body at the house of the fair Coralie."

"Coralie is going on at the Gymnase," said Lucien.

"Very well, gentlemen; it is understood that we push Coralie, eh? Put a few lines about her new engagement in your papers, and say nothing about her talent. Credit

the management of the Gymnase with tact and discernment; will it do to say intelligence?"

"Yes, say intelligence," said Merlin; "Frédéric has something of Scribe's."

"Oh! Well, then, the manager of the Gymnase is the most perspicacious and far-sighted of men of business," said Vernou.

"Look here! don't write your articles on Nathan until we have come to an understanding; you shall hear why," said Étienne Lousteau. "We ought to do something for our new comrade. Lucien here has two books to bring out—a volume of sonnets and a novel. The power of the paragraph should make him a great poet due in three months; and we will make use of his sonnets (*Marguerites* is the title) to run down odes, ballads, and reveries, and all the Romantic poetry."

"It would be a droll thing if the sonnets were no good after all," said Vernou.—"What do you yourself think of your sonnets, Lucien?"

"Yes, what do you think of them?" asked one of the two whom Lucien did not know.

"They are all right, gentlemen; I give you my word," said Lousteau.

"Very well, that will do for me," said Vernou; "I will heave your book at the poets of the sacristy; I am tired of them."

"If Dauriat declines to take the *Marguerites* this evening, we will attack him by pitching into Nathan."

"But what will Nathan say?" cried Lucien.

His five colleagues burst out laughing.

"Oh! he will be delighted," said Vernou. "You will see how we manage these things."

"So he is one of us?" said one of the two journalists.

"Yes, yes, Frédéric; no tricks.—We are all working for you, Lucien, you see; you must stand by us when your turn comes. We are all friends of Nathan's, and we are attacking him. Now, let us divide Alexander's empire.—Frédéric, will you take the Français and the Odéon?"

"If these gentlemen are willing," returned the person

addressed as Frédéric. The others nodded assent, but Lucien saw a gleam of jealousy here and there.

"I am keeping the Opéra, the Italiens, and the Opéra-Comique," put in Vernou.

"And how about me? Am I to have no theaters at all?" asked the second stranger.

"Oh well, Hector can let you have the Variétés, and Lucien can spare you the Porte Saint-Martin.—Let him have the Porte Saint-Martin, Lucien, he is wild about Fanny Beaupré; and you can take the Cirque-Olympique in exchange. I shall have Bobino and the Funambules and Mme. Saqui. Now, what have we for to-morrow?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Gentlemen, be brilliant for my first number. The Baron du Châtelet and his cuttlefish bone will not last for a week, and the writer of *Le Solitaire* is worn out."

"And 'Sosthenes-Demosthenes' is stale too," said Vernou; "everybody has taken it up."

"The fact is, we want a new set of ninepins," said Frédéric.

"Suppose that we take the virtuous representatives of the Right?" suggested Lousteau. "We might say that M. de Bonald has sweaty feet."

"Let us begin a series of sketches of Ministerialist orators," suggested Hector Merlin.

"You do that, youngster; you know them; they are your own party," said Lousteau; "you could indulge any little private grudges of your own. Pitch into Beugnot and Syriéys de Mayrin hac and the rest. You might have the sketches ready in advance, and we shall have something to fall back upon."

"How if we invented one or two cases of refusal of burial with aggravating circumstances?" asked Hector.

"Do not follow in the tracks of the big Constitutional papers; they have pigeon-holes full of ecclesiastical *canards*," retorted Vernou.

"*Canards*?" repeated Lucien.

"That is our word for a scrap of fiction told for true,

put in to enliven the column of morning news when it is flat. We owe the discovery to Benjamin Franklin, the inventor of the lightning conductor and the republic. That journalist completely deceived the Encyclopædists by his transatlantic *canards*. Raynal gives two of them for facts in his *Histoire Philosophique des Indes*."

"I did not know that," said Vernou. "What were the stories?"

"One was a tale about an Englishman and a negress who helped him to escape; he sold the woman for a slave after getting her with child himself to enhance her value. The other was the eloquent defense of a young woman brought before the authorities for bearing a child out of wedlock. Franklin owned to the fraud in Necker's house when he came to Paris, much to the confusion of French philosophism. Behold how the New World twice set a bad example to the Old!"

"In Journalism," said Lousteau, "everything that is probable is true. That is an axiom."

"Criminal procedure is based on the same rule," said Vernou.

"Very well, we meet here at nine o'clock," and with that they rose, and the sitting broke up with the most affecting demonstrations of intimacy and good will.

"What have you done to Finot, Lucien, that he should make a special arrangement with you? You are the only one that he has bound to himself," said Étienne Lousteau, as they came downstairs.

"I? Nothing. It was his own proposal," said Lucien.

"As a matter of fact, if you should make your own terms with him, I should be delighted; we should, both of us, be the better for it."

On the ground floor they found Finot. He stepped across to Lousteau and asked him into the co-called private office. Giroudeau immediately put a couple of stamped agreements before Lucien.

"Sign your agreement," he said, "and the new editor will think the whole thing was arranged yesterday."

Lucien, reading the document, overheard fragments of a

tolerably warm dispute within as to the line of conduct and profits of the paper. Étienne Lousteau wanted his share of the blackmail levied by Giroudeau; and, in all probability, the matter was compromised, for the pair came out perfectly good friends.

"We will meet at Dauriat's, Lucien, in the Wooden Galleries at eight o'clock," said Étienne Lousteau.

A young man appeared, meanwhile, in search of employment, wearing the same nervous shy look with which Lucien himself had come to the office so short a while ago; and in his secret soul Lucien felt amused as he watched Giroudeau playing off the same tactics with which the old campaigner had previously foiled him. Self-interest opened his eyes to the necessity of the maneuvers which raised well-nigh insurmountable barriers between beginners and the upper room where the elect were gathered together.

"Contributors don't get very much as it is," he said, addressing Giroudeau.

"If there were more of you, there would be so much less," retorted the captain. "So there!"

The old campaigner swung his loaded cane, and went down, coughing as usual. Out in the street he was amazed to see a handsome carriage waiting on the boulevard for Lucien.

"You are the army nowadays," he said, "and we are the civilians."

"Upon my word," said Lucien, as he drove away with Coralie, "these young writers seem to me to be the best fellows alive. Here am I a journalist, sure of making six hundred francs a month if I work like a horse. But I shall find a publisher for my two books, and I will write others; for my friends will insure a success. And so Coralie, '*vogue la galère!*' as you say."

"You will make your way, dear boy; but you must not be as good-natured as you are good-looking; it would be the ruin of you. Be ill-natured, that is the proper thing."

Coralie and Lucien drove in the Bois de Boulogne, and again they met the Marquise d'Espard, Mme. de Bargeton, and the Baron du Châtelet. Mme. de Bargeton gave Lucien a languishing glance which might be taken as a greeting.



Camusot had ordered the best possible dinner; and Coralie, feeling that she was rid of her adorer, was more charming to the poor silk-mercier than she had ever been in the fourteen months during which their connection lasted; he had never seen her so kindly, so enchantingly lovely.

"Come," he thought, "let us keep near her anyhow!"

In consequence, Camusot made secret overtures. He promised Coralie an income of six thousand livres; he would transfer the stock in the funds into her name (his wife knew nothing about the investment) if only she would consent to be his mistress still. He would shut his eyes to her lover.

"And betray such an angel? . . . Why, just look at him, you old fossil, and look at yourself!" and her eyes turned to her poet. Camusot had pressed Lucien to drink till the poet's head was rather cloudy.

There was no help for it; Camusot made up his mind to wait till sheer want should give him this woman a second time.

"Then I can only be your friend," he said, as he kissed her on the forehead.

Lucien went from Coralie and Camusot to the Wooden Galleries. What a change had been wrought in his mind by his initiation into Journalism! He mixed fearlessly now with the crowd which surged to and fro in the buildings; he even swaggered a little because he had a mistress; and he walked into Dauriat's shop in an offhand manner because he was a journalist.

He found himself among distinguished men; gave a hand to Blondet and Nathan and Finot, and to all the coterie with whom he had been fraternizing for a week. He was a personage, he thought, and he flattered himself that he surpassed his comrades. That little flick of the wine did him admirable service; he was witty, he showed that he could "howl with the wolves."

And yet, the tacit approval, the praises spoken and unspoken on which he had counted, were not forthcoming. He noticed the first stirrings of jealousy among a group, less curious, perhaps, than anxious to know the place which this

newcomer might take, and the exact portion of the sum-total of profits which he would probably secure and swallow. Lucien only saw smiles on two faces—Finot, who regarded him as a mine to be exploited, and Lousteau, who considered that he had proprietary rights in the poet, looked glad to see him. Lousteau had begun already to assume the airs of an editor; he tapped sharply on the window-panes of Dauriat's private office.

"One moment, my friend," cried a voice within as the publisher's face appeared above the green curtains.

The moment lasted an hour, and finally Lucien and Étienne were admitted into the sanctum.

"Well, have you thought over our friend's proposal?" asked Étienne Lousteau, now an editor.

"To be sure," said Dauriat, lolling like a sultan in his chair. "I have read the volume. And I submitted it to a man of taste, a good judge; for I don't pretend to understand these things myself. I myself, my friend, buy reputations ready-made, as the Englishman bought his love affairs.—You are as great as a poet as you are handsome as a man, my boy," pronounced Dauriat. "Upon my word and honor (I don't tell you that as a publisher, mind), your sonnets are magnificent; no sign of effort about them, as is natural when a man writes with inspiration and *verve*. You know your craft, in fact, one of the good points of the new school. Your volume of *Marguerites* is a fine book, but there is no business in it, and it is not worth my while to meddle with anything but a very big affair. In conscience, I won't take your sonnets. It would be impossible to push them; there is not enough in the thing to pay the expenses of a big success. You will not keep to poetry besides; this book of yours will be your first and last attempt of the kind. You are young; you bring me the everlasting volume of early verse which every man of letters writes when he leaves school, he thinks a lot of it at the time, and laughs at it later on. Lousteau, your friend, has a poem put away somewhere among his old socks, I'll warrant. Haven't you a poem that you thought a good deal of once, Lousteau?" inquired Dauriat, with a knowing glance at the other.

"How should I be writing prose otherwise, eh?" asked Lousteau.

"There, you see! He has never said a word to me about it, for our friend understands business and the trade," continued Dauriat. "For me the question is not whether you are a great poet, I know that," he added, stroking down Lucien's pride; "you have a great deal, a very great deal of merit; if I were only just starting in business, I should make the mistake of publishing your book. But in the first place, my sleeping partners and those at the back of me are cutting off my supplies; I dropped twenty thousand francs over poetry last year, and that is enough for them; they will not hear of any more just now, and they are my masters. Nevertheless, that is not the question. I admit that you may be a great poet, but will you be a prolific writer? Will you hatch sonnets regularly? Will you run into ten volumes? Is there business in it? Of course not. You will be a delightful prose writer; you have too much sense to spoil your style with tagging rhymes together. You have a chance to make thirty thousand francs per annum by writing for the papers, and you will not exchange that chance for three thousand francs made with difficulty by your hemistichs and strophes and tomfoolery——"

"You know that he is on the paper, Dauriat?" put in Lousteau.

"Yes," Dauriat answered. "Yes, I saw his article, and in his own interests I decline the *Marguerites*. Yes, sir, in six months' time I shall have paid you more money for the articles that I shall ask you to write than for your poetry that will not sell."

"And fame?" said Lucien.

Dauriat and Lousteau laughed.

"Oh dear!" said Lousteau, "there be illusions left."

"Fame means ten years of sticking to work, and a hundred thousand francs lost or made in the publishing trade. If you find anybody mad enough to print your poetry for you, you will feel some respect for me in another twelve-month, when you have had time to see the outcome of the transaction."

"Have you the manuscript here?" Lucien asked coldly.

"Here it is, my friend," said Dauriat. The publisher's manner towards Lucien had sweetened singularly.

Lucien took up the roll without looking at the string, so sure he felt that Dauriat had read his *Marguerites*. He went out with Lousteau, seemingly neither disconcerted nor dissatisfied. Dauriat went with them into the shop, talking of his newspaper and Lousteau's daily, while Lucien played with the manuscript of the *Marguerites*.

"Do you suppose that Dauriat has read your sonnets or sent them to anyone else?" Étienne Lousteau snatched an opportunity to whisper.

"Yes," said Lucien.

"Look at the string." Lucien looked down at the blot of ink, and saw that the mark on the string still coincided; he turned white with rage.

"Which of the sonnets was it that you particularly liked?" he asked, turning to the publisher.

"They are all of them remarkable, my friend; but the sonnet on the Marguerite is delightful, the closing thought is fine, and exquisitely expressed. I felt sure from that sonnet that your prose work would command a success, and I spoke to Finot about you at once. Write articles for us, and we will pay you well for them. Fame is a very fine thing, you see, but don't forget the practical and solid, and take every chance that turns up. When you have made money, you can write poetry."

The poet dashed out of the shop to avoid an explosion. He was furious. Lousteau followed.

"Well, my boy, pray keep cool. Take men as they are—for means to an end. Do you wish for revenge?"

"At any price," muttered the poet.

"Here is a copy of Nathan's book. Dauriat has just given it to me. The second edition is coming out to-morrow; read the book again, and knock off an article demolishing it. Félicien Vernou cannot endure Nathan, for he thinks that Nathan's success will injure his own forthcoming book. It is a craze with these little minds to fancy that there is not room for two successes under the sun; so he will see

that your article finds a place in the big paper for which he writes."

"But what is there to be said against the book; it is good work?" cried Lucien.

"Oh, I say! you must learn your trade," said Lousteau, laughing. "Given that the book were a masterpiece, under the stroke of your pen it must turn to dull trash, dangerous and unwholesome stuff."

"But how?"

"You turn all the good points into bad ones."

"I am incapable of such a juggler's feat."

"My dear boy, a journalist is a juggler; a man must make up his mind to the drawbacks of the calling. Look here! I am not a bad fellow; this is the way *I* should set to work myself. Attention! You might begin by praising the book, and amuse yourself a while by saying what you really think. 'Good,' says the reader, 'this critic is not jealous; he will be impartial, no doubt,' and from that point your public will think that your criticism is a piece of conscientious work. Then, when you have won your reader's confidence, you will regret that you must blame the tendency and influence of such work upon French literature. 'Does not France,' you will say, 'sway the whole intellectual world? French writers have kept Europe in the path of analysis and philosophical criticism from age to age by their powerful style and the original turn given by them to ideas.' Here, for the benefit of the philistine, insert a panegyric on Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Montesquieu, and Buffon. Hold forth upon the inexorable French language; show how it spreads a varnish, as it were, over thought. Let fall a few aphorisms, such as—'A great writer in France is invariably a great man; he writes in a language which compels him to think; it is otherwise in other countries'—and so on, and so on. Then, to prove your case, draw a comparison between Rabener, the German satirical moralist, and La Bruyère. Nothing gives a critic such an air as an apparent familiarity with foreign literature. Kant is Cousin's pedestal.

"Once on that ground you bring out a word which sums

up the French men of genius of the eighteenth century for the benefit of simpletons—you call that literature the ‘literature of ideas.’ Armed with this expression, you fling all the mighty dead at the heads of the illustrious living. You explain that in the present day a new form of literature has sprung up; that dialogue (the easiest form of writing) is overdone, and description dispenses with any need for thinking on the part of the author or reader. You bring up the fiction of Voltaire, Diderot, Sterne, and Le Sage, so trenchant, so compact of the stuff of life; and turn from them to the modern novel, composed of scenery and word-pictures and metaphors and the dramatic situations, of which Scott is full. Invention may be displayed in such work, but there is no room for anything else. ‘The romance after the manner of Scott is a mere passing fashion in literature,’ you will say, and fulminate against the fatal way in which ideas are diluted and beaten thin; cry out against a style within the reach of any intellect, for anyone can commence author at small expense in a way of literature, which you can nickname the ‘literature of imagery.’

“Then you fall upon Nathan with your argument, and establish it beyond cavil that he is a mere imitator with an appearance of genius. The concise grand style of the eighteenth century is lacking; you show that the author substitutes events for sentiments. Action and stir are not life; he gives you pictures, but no ideas.

“Come out with such phrases, and people will take them up.—In spite of the merits of the work, it seems to you to be dangerous, nay, a fatal precedent. It throws open the gates of the temple of Fame to the crowd; and in the distance you descry a legion of petty authors hastening to imitate this novel and easy style of writing.

“Here you launch out into resounding lamentations over the decadence and decline of taste, and slip in eulogies of MM. Étienne Jouy, Tissot, Gosse, Duval, Jay, Benjamin Constant, Aignan, Baour-Lormian, Villemain, and the whole Liberal-Bonapartist chorus who patronize Vernou’s paper. Next you draw a picture of that glorious phalanx of writers repelling the invasion of the Romantics; these are the up-

holders of ideas and style as against metaphor and balderdash; the modern representatives of the school of Voltaire as opposed to the English and German schools, even as the seventeen heroic deputies of the Left fought the battle for the nation against the Ultras of the Right.

"And then, under cover of names respected by the immense majority of Frenchmen (who will always be against the Government), you can crush Nathan; for although his work is far above the average, it confirms the bourgeois taste for literature without ideas. And after that, you understand, it is no longer a question of Nathan and his book, but of France and the glory of France. It is the duty of all honest and courageous pens to make strenuous opposition to these foreign importations. And with that you flatter your readers. Shrewd French mother-wit is not easily caught napping. If publishers, by ways which you do not choose to specify, have stolen a success, the reading public very soon judges for itself, and corrects the mistakes made by some five hundred fools, who always rush to the fore.

"Say that the publisher who sold a first edition of the book is audacious indeed to issue a second, and express regret that so clever a man does not know the taste of the country better. There is the gist of it. Just a sprinkle of the salt of wit and a dash of vinegar to bring out the flavor, and Dauriat will be done to a turn. But mind that you end with seeming to pity Nathan for a mistake, and speak of him as of a man from whom contemporary literature may look for great things if he renounces these ways."

Lucien was amazed at this talk from Lousteau. As the journalist spoke, the scales fell from his eyes; he beheld new truths of which he had never before caught so much as a glimpse.

"But all this that you are saying is quite true and just," cried he.

"If it were not, how could you make it tell against Nathan's book?" asked Lousteau. "That is the first manner of demolishing a book, my boy; it is the pickax style of

criticism. But there are plenty of other ways. Your education will complete itself in time. When you are absolutely obliged to speak of a man whom you do not like, for proprietors and editors are sometimes under compulsion, you bring out a neutral special article. You put the title of the book at the head of it, and begin with general remarks, on the Greeks and the Romans if you like, and wind up with—‘and this brings us to Mr. So-and-so’s book, which will form the subject of a second article.’ The second article never appears, and in this way you snuff out the book between two promises. But in this case you are writing down, not Nathan, but Dauriat; he needs the pickaxe style. If the book is really good, the pickaxe does no harm; but it goes to the core of it if it is bad. In the first case, no one but the publisher is any the worse; in the second, you do the public a service. Both methods, moreover, are equally serviceable in political criticism.”

Étienne Lousteau’s cruel lesson opened up possibilities for Lucien’s imagination. He understood this craft to admiration.

“Let us go to the office,” said Lousteau; “we shall find our friends there, and we will agree among ourselves to charge at Nathan; they will laugh, you will see.”

Arrived in the Rue Saint-Fiacre, they went up to the room in the roof where the paper was made up, and Lucien was surprised and gratified no less to see the alacrity with which his comrades proceeded to demolish Nathan’s book. Hector Merlin took up a piece of paper and wrote a few lines for his own newspaper:

“A second edition of M. Nathan’s book is announced. We had intended to keep silence with regard to that work, but its apparent success obliges us to publish an article, not so much upon the book itself as upon certain tendencies of the new school of literature.”

At the head of the “*Facetiæ*” in the morning’s paper, Lousteau inserted the following note:



"M. Dauriat is bringing out a second edition of M. Nathan's book. Evidently he does not know the legal maxim, *Non bis in idem*. All honor to rash courage."

Lousteau's words had been like a torch for burning; Lucien's hot desire to be revenged on Dauriat took the place of conscience and inspiration. For three days he never left Coralie's room; he sat at work by the fire, waited upon by Bérénice; petted, in moments of weariness, by the silent and attentive Coralie; till, at the end of that time, he had made a fair copy of about three columns of criticism, and an astonishingly good piece of work.

It was nine o'clock in the evening when he ran round to the office, found his associates, and read over his work to an attentive audience. Félicien said not a syllable. He took up the manuscript, and made off with it pell-mell down the staircase.

"What has come to him?" cried Lucien.

"He has taken your article straight to the printer," said Hector Merlin. "'Tis a masterpiece; not a line to add, nor a word to take out."

"There was no need to do more than show you the way," said Lousteau.

"I should like to see Nathan's face when he reads this to-morrow," said another contributor, beaming with gentle satisfaction.

"It is as well to have you for a friend," remarked Hector Merlin.

"Then it will do?" Lucien asked quickly.

"Blondet and Vignon will feel bad," said Lousteau.

"Here is a short article which I have knocked together for you," began Lucien; "if it takes, I could write you a series."

"Read it over," said Lousteau, and Lucien read the first of the delightful short papers which made the fortune of the little newspaper; a series of sketches of Paris life, a portrait, a type, an ordinary event, or some of the oddities of the great city. This specimen—"The Man in the Street"—was written in a way that was fresh and original; the

thoughts were struck out by the shock of the words, the sounding ring of the adverbs and adjectives caught the reader's ear. The paper was as different from the serious and profound article on Nathan as the *Lettres Persanes* from the *Esprit des Lois*.

"You are a born journalist," said Lousteau. "It shall go in to-morrow. Do as much of this sort of thing as you like."

"Ah, by the by," said Merlin, "Dauriat is furious about those two bombshells hurled into his magazine. I have just come from him. He was hurling imprecations, and in such a rage with Finot, who told him that he had sold his paper to you. As for me, I took him aside and just said a word in his ear. 'The *Marguerites* will cost you dear,' I told him. 'A man of talent comes to you, you turn the cold shoulder on him, and send him into the arms of the newspapers.'"

"Dauriat will be dumfounded by the article on Nathan," said Lousteau. "Do you see now what journalism is, Lucien? Your revenge is beginning to tell. The Baron Châtelet came here this morning for your address. There was a cutting article upon him in this morning's issue; he is a weakling, that buck of the Empire, and he has lost his head. Have you seen the paper? It is a funny article. Look, 'Funeral of the Heron, and the Cuttlefish-bone's lament.' Mme. de Bargeton is called the Cuttlefish-bone now, and no mistake, and Châtelet is known everywhere as Baron Heron."

Lucien took up the paper, and could not help laughing at Vernou's extremely clever skit.

"They will capitulate soon," said Hector Merlin.

Lucien merrily assisted at the manufacture of epigrams and jokes at the end of the paper; and the associates smoked and chatted over the day's adventures, over the foibles of some among their number, or some new hit of personal gossip. From their witty, malicious, bantering talk, Lucien gained a knowledge of the inner life of literature, and of the manners and customs of the craft.

"While they are setting up the paper, I will go round

with you and introduce you to the managers of your theaters, and take you behind the scenes," said Lousteau. "And then we will go to the Panorama-Dramatique, and have a frolic in their dressing-rooms."

Arm in arm, they went from theater to theater. Lucien was introduced to this one and that, and enthroned as a dramatic critic. Managers complimented him, actresses flung him side glances; for every one of them knew that this was the critic who, by a single article, had gained an engagement at the Gymnase, with twelve thousand francs a year, for Coralie, and another for Florine at the Panorama-Dramatique with eight thousand francs. Lucien was a man of importance. The little ovations raised Lucien in his own eyes, and taught him to know his power. At eleven o'clock the pair arrived at the Panorama-Dramatique; Lucien with a careless air that worked wonders. Nathan was there. Nathan held out a hand, which Lucien squeezed.

"Ah! my masters, so you have a mind to floor me, have you?" said Nathan, looking from one to the other.

"Just you wait till to-morrow, my dear fellow, and you shall see how Lucien has taken you in hand. Upon my word, you will be pleased. A piece of serious criticism like that is sure to do a book good."

Lucien reddened with confusion.

"Is it severe?" inquired Nathan.

"It is serious," said Lousteau.

"Then there is no harm done," Nathan rejoined. "Hector Merlin in the greenroom of the Vaudeville was saying that I had been cut up."

"Let him talk, and wait," cried Lucien, and took refuge in Coralie's dressing-room. Coralie, in her alluring costume, had just come off the stage.

Next morning, as Lucien and Coralie sat at breakfast, a carriage drove along the Rue du Vendôme. The street was quiet enough, so that they could hear the light sound made by an elegant cabriolet; and there was that in the pace of the horse, and the manner of pulling up

at the door, which tells unmistakably of a thoroughbred. Lucien went to the window, and there, in fact, beheld a splendid English horse, and no less a person than Dauriat flinging the reins to his man as he stepped down.

"'Tis the publisher, Coralie," said Lucien.

"Let him wait, Bérénice," Coralie said at once.

Lucien smiled at her presence of mind, and kissed her with a great rush of tenderness. This mere girl had made his interests hers in a wonderful way; she was quick-witted where he was concerned. The apparition of the insolent publisher, the sudden and complete collapse of that prince of charlatans, was due to circumstances almost entirely forgotten, so utterly has the book trade changed during the last fifteen years.

From 1816 to 1827, when the newspaper reading-rooms were only just beginning to lend new books, the fiscal law pressed more heavily than ever upon periodical publications, and necessity created the invention of advertisements. Paragraphs and articles in the newspapers were the only means of advertisement known in those days; and French newspapers before the year 1822 were so small, that the largest sheet of those times was not so large as the smallest daily paper of ours. Dauriat and Ladvocat, the first publishers to make a stand against the tyranny of journalists, were also the first to use the placards which caught the attention of Paris by strange type, striking colors, vignettes, and (at a later time) by lithograph illustrations, till a placard became a fairy-tale for the eyes, and not unfrequently a snare for the purse of the amateur. So much originality indeed was expended on placards in Paris, that one of that peculiar kind of maniacs, known as a collector, possesses a complete series.

At first the placard was confined to the shop windows and stalls upon the boulevards in Paris; afterwards it spread all over France, till it was supplanted to some extent by a return to advertisements in the newspapers. But the placard, nevertheless, which continues to strike the eye, after the advertisement and the book which is advertised are both

forgotten, will always be among us; it took a new lease of life when walls were plastered with posters.

Newspaper advertising, the offspring of heavy stamp duties, a high rate of postage, and the heavy deposits of caution-money required by the Government as security for good behavior, is within the reach of all who care to pay for it, and has turned the fourth page of every journal into a harvest field alike for the speculator and the Inland Revenue Department. The press restrictions were invented in the time of M. de Villèle, who had a chance, if he had but known it, of destroying the power of journalism by allowing newspapers to multiply till no one took any notice of them; but he missed his opportunity, and a sort of privilege was created, as it were, by the almost insuperable difficulties put in the way of starting a new venture. So, in 1821, the periodical press might be said to have power of life and death over the creations of the brain and the publishing trade. A few lines among the items of news cost a fearful amount. Intrigues were multiplied in newspaper offices; and of a night when the columns were divided up, and this or that article was put in or left out to suit the space, the printing-room became a sort of battlefield; so much so, that the largest publishing firms had writers in their pay to insert short articles in which many ideas are put in little space. Obscure journalists of this stamp were only paid after the insertion of the items, and not unfrequently spent the night in the printing-office to make sure that their contributions were not omitted; sometimes putting in a long article, obtained Heaven knows how, sometimes a few lines of a puff.

The manners and customs of journalism and of the publishing houses have since changed so much, that many people nowadays will not believe what immense efforts were made by writers and publishers of books to secure a newspaper puff; the martyrs of glory, and all those who are condemned to the penal servitude of a life-long success, were reduced to such shifts, and stooped to such depths of bribery and corruption as seem fabulous to-day. Every kind of persuasion was brought to bear on journalists—dinners, flattery, and

presents. The following story will throw more light on the close connection between the critic and the publisher than any quantity of flat assertions.

There was once upon a time an editor of an important paper, a clever writer with a prospect of becoming a statesman; he was young in those days, and fond of pleasure, and he became the favorite of a well-known publishing house. One Sunday the wealthy head of the firm was entertaining several of the foremost journalists of the time in the country, and the mistress of the house, then a young and pretty woman, went to walk in her park with the illustrious visitor. The head clerk of the firm, a cool, steady, methodical German with nothing but business in his head, was discussing a project with one of the journalists, and as they chatted they walked on into the woods beyond the park. In among the thickets the German thought he caught a glimpse of his hostess, put up his eyeglass, made a sign to his young companion to be silent, and turned back, stepping softly.—“What did you see?” asked the journalist.—“Nothing particular,” said the clerk. “Our affair of the long article is settled. To-morrow we shall have at least three columns in the *Débats*.”

Another anecdote will show the influence of a single article.

A book of M. de Chateaubriand's on the last of the Stuarts was for some time a “nightingale” on the bookseller's shelves. A single article in the *Journal des Débats* sold the work in a week. In those days, when there were no lending libraries, a publisher would sell an edition of ten thousand copies of a book by a Liberal if it was well reviewed by the Opposition papers; but then the Belgian pirated editions were not as yet.

The preparatory attacks made by Lucien's friends, followed up by his article on Nathan, proved efficacious; they stopped the sale of his book. Nathan escaped with the mortification; he had been paid; he had nothing to lose; but Dauriat was like to lose thirty thousand francs. The trade in new books may, in fact, be summed up much on this wise. A ream of blank paper costs fifteen francs, a ream of printed paper is worth anything between a hundred

sous and a hundred crowns, according to its success; a favorable or unfavorable review at a critical time often decides the question; and Dauriat, having five hundred reams of printed paper on hand, hurried to make terms with Lucien. The sultan was now the slave.

After waiting for some time, fidgeting and making as much noise as he could while parleying with Bérénice, he at last obtained speech of Lucien; and, arrogant publisher though he was, he came in with the radiant air of a courtier in the royal presence, mingled, however, with a certain self-sufficiency and easy good humor.

"Don't disturb yourselves, my little dears! How nice they look, just like a pair of turtle-doves! Who would think now, mademoiselle, that he, with that girl's face of his, could be a tiger with claws of steel, ready to tear a reputation to rags, just as he tears your wrappers, I'll be bound, when you are not quick enough to unfasten them," and he laughed before he had finished his jest.

"My dear boy——" he began, sitting down beside Lucien.—"Mademoiselle, I am Dauriat," he said, interrupting himself. He judged it expedient to fire his name at her like a pistol shot, for he considered that Coralie was less cordial than she should have been.

"Have you breakfasted, monsieur; will you keep us company?" asked Coralie.

"Why, yes; it is easier to talk at table," said Dauriat. "Besides, by accepting your invitation I shall have a right to expect you to dine with my friend Lucien here, for we must be close friends now, hand and glove!"

"Bérénice! Bring oysters, lemons, fresh butter, and champagne," said Coralie.

"You are too clever not to know what has brought me here," said Dauriat, fixing his eyes on Lucien.

"You have come to buy my sonnets."

"Precisely. First of all, let us lay down our arms on both sides." As he spoke he took out a neat pocketbook, drew from it three bills for a thousand francs each, and laid them before Lucien with a suppliant's air. "Is monsieur content?" asked he.

"Yes," said the poet. A sense of beatitude, for which no words exist, flooded his soul at the sight of that unhopèd wealth. He controlled himself, but he longed to sing aloud, to jump for joy; he was ready to believe in Aladdin's lamp and in enchantment; he believed in his own genius, in short.

"Then the *Marguerites* are mine," continued Dauriat; "but you will undertake not to attack my publications, won't you?"

"The *Marguerites* are yours, but I cannot pledge my pen; it is at the service of my friends, as theirs are mine."

"But you are one of my authors now. All my authors are my friends. So you won't spoil my business without warning me beforehand, so that I am prepared, will you?"

"I agree to that."

"To your fame!" and Dauriat raised his glass.

"I see that you have read the *Marguerites*," said Lucien. Dauriat was not disconcerted.

"My boy, a publisher cannot pay a greater compliment than by buying your *Marguerites* unread. In six months' time you will be a great poet. You will be written up; people are afraid of you; I shall have no difficulty in selling your book. I am the same man of business that I was four days ago. It is not I who have changed; it is *you*. Last week your sonnets were so many cabbage leaves for me; to-day your position has ranked them beside Delavigne."

"Ah well," said Lucien, "if you have not read my sonnets, you have read my article." With the sultan's pleasure of possessing a fair mistress, and the certainty of success, he had grown satirical and adorably impertinent of late.

"Yes, my friend; do you think I should have come here in such a hurry but for that? That terrible article of yours is very well written, worse luck. Oh! you have a very great gift, my boy. Take my advice and make the most of your vogue," he added, with good humor, which masked the extreme insolence of the speech. "But have you yourself a copy of the paper? Have you seen your article in print?"

"Not yet," said Lucien, "though this is the first long



piece of prose which I have published; but Hector will have sent a copy to my address in the Rue Charlot."

"Here—read!" . . . cried Dauriat, copying Talma's gesture in *Manlius*.

Lucien took the paper, but Coralie snatched it from him.

"The firstfruits of your pen belong to me, as you well know," she laughed.

Dauriat was unwontedly courtier-like and complimentary. He was afraid of Lucien, and therefore he asked him to a great dinner which he was giving to a party of journalists towards the end of the week, and Coralie was included in the invitation. He took the *Marguerites* away with him when he went, asking *his* poet to look in when he pleased in the Wooden Galleries, and the agreement should be ready for his signature. Dauriat never forgot the royal airs with which he endeavored to overawe superficial observers, and to impress them with the notion that he was a Mæcenas rather than a publisher; at this moment he left the three thousand francs, waving away in lordly fashion the receipt which Lucien offered, kissed Coralie's hand, and took his departure.

"Well, dear love, would you have seen many of these bits of paper if you had stopped in your hole in the Rue de Cluny, prowling about among the musty old books in the Bibliothèque de Sainte-Geneviève?" asked Coralie, for she knew the whole story of Lucien's life by this time. "Those little friends of yours in the Rue des Quatre-Vents are great ninnies, it seems to me."

His brothers of the *cénacle*! And Lucien could hear the verdict and laugh.

He had seen himself in print; he had just experienced the ineffable joy of the author, that first pleasurable thrill of gratified vanity which comes but once. The full import and bearing of his article became apparent to him as he read and re-read it. The garb of print is to manuscript as the stage is to women; it brings beauties and defects to light, killing and giving life; the fine thoughts and the faults alike stare you in the face.

Lucien, in his excitement and rapture, gave not another

thought to Nathan. Nathan was a stepping-stone for him—that was all; and he (Lucien) was happy exceedingly—he thought himself rich. The money brought by Dauriat was a very Potosi for the lad who used to go about unnoticed through the streets of Angoulême and down the steep path into L'Houmeau to Postel's garret, where his whole family had lived upon an income of twelve hundred francs. The pleasures of his life in Paris must inevitably dim the memories of those days; but so keen were they, that, as yet, he seemed to be back again in the Place du Mûrier. He thought of Eve, his beautiful, noble sister, of David his friend, and of his poor mother, and he sent Bérénice out to change one of the notes. While she went he wrote a few lines to his family, and on the maid's return he sent her to the coach-office with a packet of five hundred francs addressed to his mother. He could not trust himself; he wanted to send the money at once; later he might not be able to do it. Both Lucien and Coralie looked upon this restitution as a meritorious action. Coralie put her arms about her lover and kissed him, and thought him a model son and brother; she could not make enough of him, for generosity is a trait of character which delights these kindly creatures, who always carry their hearts in their hands.

"We have a dinner now every day for a week," she said; "we will make a little carnival; you have worked quite hard enough."

Coralie, fain to delight in the beauty of a man whom all other women should envy her, took Lucien back to Staub. He was not dressed finely enough for her. Thence the lovers went to drive in the Bois de Boulogne, and came back to dine at Mme. du Val-Noble's. Rastignac, Bixiou, des Lupeaulx, Finot, Blondet, Vignon, the Baron de Nucingen, Beaudenord, Philippe Bridau, Conti, the great musician, all the artists and speculators, all the men who seek for violent sensations as a relief from immense labors, gave Lucien a welcome among them. And Lucien had gained confidence; he gave himself out in talk as though he had not to live

by his wit, and was pronounced to be a "clever fellow" in the slang of the coterie of semi-comrades.

"Oh! we must wait and see what he has in him," said Théodore Gaillard, a poet patronized by the Court, who thought of starting a Royalist paper to be entitled the *Réveil* at a later day.

After dinner, Merlin and Lucien, Coralie and Mme. du Val-Noble, went to the Opéra, where Merlin had a box. The whole party adjourned thither, and Lucien triumphant reappeared upon the scene of his first serious check.

He walked in the lobby, arm in arm with Merlin and Blondet, looking the dandies who had once made merry at his expense between the eyes. Châtelet was under his feet. He clashed glances with de Marsay, Vandenesse, and Manerville, the bucks of that day. And indeed Lucien, beautiful and elegantly arrayed, had caused a discussion in the Marquise d'Espard's box; Rastignac had paid a long visit, and the Marquise and Mme. de Bargeton put up their opera glasses at Coralie. Did the sight of Lucien send a pang of regret through Mme. de Bargeton's heart? This thought was uppermost in the poet's mind. The longing for revenge aroused in him by the sight of the Corinne of Angoulême was as fierce as on that day when the lady and her cousin had cut him in the Champs-Élysées.

"Did you bring an amulet with you from the provinces?" —It was Blondet who made this inquiry some few days later, when he called at eleven o'clock in the morning and found that Lucien was not yet risen.—"His good looks are making ravages from cellar to garret, high and low," continued Blondet, kissing Coralie on the forehead. "I have come to enlist you, dear fellow," he continued, grasping Lucien by the hand. "Yesterday, at the Italiens, the Comtesse de Montcornet asked me to bring you to her house. You will not give a refusal to a charming woman? You meet people of the first fashion there."

"If Lucien is nice, he will not go to see your Countess," put in Coralie. "What call is there for him to show his face in fine society? He would only be bored there."

"Have you a vested interest in him? Are you jealous of fine ladies?"

"Yes," cried Coralie. "They are worse than we are."

"How do you know that, my pet?" asked Blondet.

"From their husbands," retorted she. "You are forgetting that I once had six months of de Marsay."

"Do you suppose, child, that *I* am particularly anxious to take such a handsome fellow as your poet to Mme. de Montcornet's house? If you object, let us consider that nothing has been said. But I don't fancy that the women are so much in the question as a poor devil that Lucien pilloried in his newspaper; he is begging for mercy and peace. The Baron du Châtelet is imbecile enough to take the thing seriously. The Marquise d'Espard, Mme. de Bargeton, and Mme. de Montcornet's set have taken up the Heron's cause; and I have undertaken to reconcile Petrarch and his Laura—Mme. de Bargeton and Lucien."

"Aha!" cried Lucien, the glow of the intoxication of revenge throbbing full-pulsed through every vein. "Aha! so my foot is on their necks! You make me adore my pen, worship my friends, bow down to the fate-dispensing power of the press. I have not written a single sentence as yet upon the Heron and the Cuttlefish-bone.—I will go with you, my boy," he cried, catching Blondet by the waist; "yes, I will go; but first, the couple shall feel the weight of *this*, for so light as it is." He flourished the pen which had written the article upon Nathan.

"To-morrow," he cried, "I will hurl a couple of columns at their heads. Then, we will see. Don't be frightened, Coralie, it is not love but revenge; revenge! And I will have it to the full!"

"What a man it is!" said Blondet. "If you but knew, Lucien, how rare such explosions are in this jaded Paris, you might appreciate yourself. You will be a precious scamp" (the actual expression was a trifle stronger); "you are in a fair way to be a power in the land."

"He will get on," said Coralie.

"Well, he has come a good way already in six weeks."

"And if he should climb so high that he can reach a scepter by treading over a corpse, he shall have Coralie's body for a stepping-stone," said the girl.

"You are a pair of lovers of the Golden Age," said Blondet.—"I congratulate you on your big article," he added, turning to Lucien. "There were a lot of new things in it. You are past master!"

Lousteau called with Hector Merlin and Vernou. Lucien was immensely flattered by this attention. Félicien Vernou brought a hundred francs for Lucien's article; it was felt that such a contributor must be well paid to attach him to the paper.

Coralie, looking round at the chapter of journalists, ordered in a breakfast from the 'Cadran Bleu, the nearest restaurant, and asked her visitors to adjourn to her handsomely furnished dining-room when Bérénice announced that the meal was ready. In the middle of the repast, when the champagne had gone to all heads, the motive of the visit came out.

"You do not mean to make an enemy of Nathan, do you?" asked Lousteau. "Nathan is a journalist, and he has friends; he might play you an ugly trick with your first book. You have your *Archer of Charles IX.* to sell, have you not? We went round to Nathan this morning; he is in a terrible way. But you will set about another article, and puff praise in his face."

"What! After my article against his book, would you have me say——" began Lucien.

The whole party cut him short with a shout of laughter.

"Did you ask him to supper here the day after tomorrow?" asked Blondet.

"Your article was not signed," added Lousteau. "Félicien, not being quite such a new hand as you are, was careful to put an initial C at the bottom. You can do that now with all your articles in his paper, which is pure unadulterated Left. We are all of us in the Opposition. Félicien was tactful enough not to compromise your future opinions. Hector's shop is Right Center; you might sign your work on it with an L. If you cut a man up, you

do it anonymously; if you praise him, it is just as well to put your name to your article."

"It is not the signatures that trouble me," returned Lucien, "but I cannot see anything to be said in favor of the book."

"Then did you really think as you wrote?" asked Hector.

"Yes."

"Oh! I thought you were cleverer than that, youngster," said Blondet. "No. Upon my word, as I looked at that forehead of yours, I credited you with the omnipotence of the great mind—the power of seeing both sides of everything. In literature, my boy, every idea is reversible, and no man can take upon himself to decide which is the right or wrong side. Everything is bi-lateral in the domain of thought. Ideas are binary. Janus is a fable signifying Criticism and the symbol of Genius. The Almighty alone is triform. What raises Molière and Corneille above the rest of us but the faculty of saying one thing with an Alceste or an Octave, and another with a Philinte or a Cinna? Rousseau wrote a letter against dueling in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, and another in favor of it. Which of the two represented his own opinion? will you venture to take it upon yourself to decide? Which of us could give judgment for Clarissa or Lovelace, Hector or Achilles? Who was Homer's hero? What did Richardson himself think? It is the function of criticism to look at a man's work in all its aspects. We draw up our case, in short."

"Do you really stick to your written opinions?" asked Vernou, with a satirical expression. "Why, we are retailers of phrases; that is how we make a livelihood. When you try to do a good piece of work—to write a book, in short—you can put your thoughts, yourself into it, and cling to it, and fight for it; but as for newspaper articles, read to-day and forgotten to-morrow, they are worth nothing in my eyes but the money that is paid for them. If you attach any importance to such drivel, you might as well make the sign of the Cross and invoke Heaven when you sit down to write a tradesman's circular."

Everyone apparently was astonished at Lucien's scruples.

The last rags of the boyish conscience were torn away, and he was invested with the *toga virilis* of journalism.

"Do you know what Nathan said by way of comforting himself after your criticism?" asked Lousteau.

"How should I know?"

"Nathan exclaimed, 'Paragraphs pass away; but a great work lives!' He will be here to supper in two days, and he will be sure to fall flat at your feet, and kiss your claws, and swear that you are a great man."

"That would be a funny thing," was Lucien's comment.

"*Funny!*" repeated Blondet. "He can't help himself."

"I am quite willing, my friends," said Lucien, on whom the wine had begun to take effect. "But what am I to say?"

"Oh well, refute yourself in three good columns in Merlin's paper. We have been enjoying the sight of Nathan's wrath; we have just been telling him that he owes us no little gratitude for getting up a hot controversy that will sell his second edition in a week. In his eyes at this present moment you are a spy, a scoundrel, a caitiff wretch; the day after to-morrow you will be a genius, an uncommonly clever fellow, one of Plutarch's men. Nathan will hug you and call you his best friend. Dauriat has been to see you; you have your three thousand francs; you have worked the trick! Now you want Nathan's respect and esteem. Nobody ought to be let in except the publisher. We must not immolate anyone but an enemy. We should not talk like this if it were a question of some outsider, some inconvenient person who had made a name for himself without us and was not wanted; but Nathan is one of us. Blondet got someone to attack him in the *Mercure* for the pleasure of replying in the *Débats*. For which reason the first edition went off at once."

"My friends, upon my word and honor, I cannot write two words in praise of that book——"

"You will have another hundred francs," interrupted Merlin. "Nathan will have brought you in ten louis d'or, to say nothing of an article that you might put in Finot's paper; you would get a hundred francs for writing that,

and another hundred francs from Dauriat—total, twenty louis.”

“But what am I to say?”

“Here is your way out of the difficulty,” said Blondet, after some thought. “Say that the envy that fastens on all good work, like wasps on ripe fruit, has attempted to set its fangs in this production. The captious critic, trying his best to find fault, has been obliged to invent theories for that purpose, and has drawn a distinction between two kinds of literature—‘the literature of ideas and the literature of imagery,’ as he calls them. On the heads of that, youngster, say that to give expression to ideas through imagery is the highest form of art. Try to show that all poetry is summed up in that, and lament that there is so little poetry in French; quote foreign criticisms on the unimaginative precision of our style, and then extol M. de Canalis and Nathan for the services they have done France by infusing a less prosaic spirit into the language. Knock your previous argument to pieces by calling attention to the fact that we have made progress since the eighteenth century. (Discover the ‘progress,’ a beautiful word to mystify the bourgeois public.) Say that the new methods in literature concentrate all styles, comedy and tragedy, description, character-drawing and dialogues, in a series of pictures set in the brilliant frame of a plot which holds the reader’s interest. The Novel, which demands sentiment, style, and imagery, is the greatest creation of modern days; it is the successor of stage comedy grown obsolete with its restrictions. Facts and ideas are all within the province of fiction. The intellect of an incisive moralist, like La Bruyère, the power of treating character as Molière could treat it, the grand machinery of a Shakespeare, together with the portrayal of the most subtle shades of passion (the one treasury left untouched by our predecessors)—for all this the modern novel affords free scope. How far superior is all this to the cut-and-dried logic-chopping, the cold analysis to the eighteenth century!—‘The Novel,’ say sententiously, ‘is the Epic grown amusing.’ Instance *Corinne*, bring Mme. de Staël up to support your argument. The eighteenth cen-



tury called all things in question; it is the task of the nineteenth to conclude and speak the last word; and the last word of the nineteenth century has been for realities—realities which live however and move. Passion, in short, an element unknown in Voltaire's philosophy, has been brought into play. Here a diatribe against Voltaire, and as for Rousseau, his characters are polemics and systems masquerading. Julie and Claire are entelechies—informing spirit awaiting flesh and bones.

"You might slip off on a side issue at this, and say that we owe a new and original literature to the Peace and the Restoration of the Bourbons, for you are writing for a Right Center paper.

"Scoff at Founders of Systems. And cry with a glow of fine enthusiasm, 'Here are errors and misleading statements in abundance in our contemporary's work, and to what end? To depreciate a fine work, to deceive the public, and to arrive at this conclusion—"A book that sells, does not sell." ' *Proh pudor!* (Mind you put *Proh pudor!* 'tis a harmless expletive that stimulates the reader's interest.) Foresee the approaching decadence of criticism, in fact. Moral—"There is but one kind of literature, the literature which aims to please. Nathan has started upon a new way; he understands his epoch and fulfills the requirements of his age—the demand for drama, the natural demand of a century in which the political stage has become a permanent puppet show. Have we not seen four dramas in a score of years—the Revolution, the Directory, the Empire, and the Restoration?' With that, wallow in dithyramb and eulogy, and the second edition shall vanish like smoke. This is the way to do it. Next Saturday put a review in our magazine, and sign it 'de Rubempré,' out in full.

"In that final article say that 'fine work always brings about abundant controversy. This week such and such a paper contained such and such an article on Nathan's book, and such another paper made a vigorous reply.' Then you criticise the critics 'C' and 'L'; pay me a passing compliment on the first article in the *Débats*, and end by averring that Nathan's work is the great book of the epoch; which

is all as if you said nothing at all; they say the same of everything that comes out.

"And so," continued Blondet, "you will have made four hundred francs in a week, to say nothing of the pleasure of now and again saying what you really think. A discerning public will maintain that either 'C' or 'L' or Rubempré is in the right of it, or mayhap all the three. Mythology, beyond doubt one of the grandest inventions of the human brain, places Truth at the bottom of a well; and what are we to do without buckets? You will have supplied the public with three for one. There you are, my boy. Go ahead!"

Lucien's head was swimming with bewilderment. Blondet kissed him on both cheeks.

"I am going to my shop," said he. And every man likewise departed to his shop. For these "*hommes forts*," a newspaper office was nothing but a shop.

They were to meet again in the evening in the Wooden Galleries, and Lucien would sign his treaty of peace with Dauriat. Florine and Lousteau, Lucien and Coralie, Blondet and Finot, were to dine in the Palais Royal; du Bruel was giving the manager of the Panorama-Dramatique a dinner.

"They are right," exclaimed Lucien, when he was alone with Coralie. "Men are made to be tools in the hands of stronger spirits. Four hundred francs for three articles! Doguereau would scarcely give me as much for a book which cost me two years of work."

"Write criticism," said Coralie, "have a good time! Look at me, I am an Andalusian girl to-night, to-morrow I may be a gypsy, and a man the night after. Do as I do, give them grimaces for their money, and let us live happily."

Lucien, smitten with love of Paradox, set himself to mount and ride that unruly hybrid product of Pegasus and Balaam's ass; started out at a gallop over the fields of thought while he took a turn in the Bois, and discovered new possibilities in Blondet's outline.

He dined as happy people dine, and signed away all his rights in the *Marguerites*. It never occurred to him that

any trouble might arise from that transaction in the future. He took a turn of work at the office, wrote off a couple of columns, and came back to the Rue de Vendôme. Next morning he found that the germs of yesterday's ideas had sprung up and developed in his brain, as ideas develop while the intellect is yet unjaded and the sap is rising; and thoroughly did he enjoy the projection of this new article. He threw himself into it with enthusiasm. At the summons of the spirit of contradiction, new charms met beneath his pen. He was witty and satirical, he rose to yet new views of sentiment, of ideas and imagery in literature. With subtle ingenuity, he went back to his own first impressions of Nathan's work, when he read it in the newsroom of the Cour du Commerce; and the ruthless, bloodthirsty critic, the lively mocker, became a poet in the final phrases which rose and fell with majestic rhythm like the swaying censer before the altar.

"One hundred francs, Coralie!" cried he, holding up eight sheets of paper covered with writing while she dressed.

The mood was upon him; he went on to indite, stroke by stroke, the promised terrible article on Châtelet and Mme. de Bargeton. That morning he experienced one of the keenest personal pleasures of journalism; he knew what it was to forge the epigram, to whet and polish the cold blade to be sheathed in a victim's heart, to make of the hilt a cunning piece of workmanship for the reader to admire. For the public admires the handle, the delicate work of the brain, while the cruelty is not apparent; how should the public know that the steel of the epigram, tempered in the fire of revenge, has been plunged deftly, to rankle in the very quick of a victim's vanity, and is reeking from wounds innumerable which it has inflicted? It is a hideous joy, that grim, solitary pleasure, relished without witnesses; it is like a duel with an absent enemy, slain at a distance by a quill; a journalist might really possess the magical power of talismans in Eastern tales. Epigram is distilled rancor, the quintessence of a hate derived from all the worst passions of man, even as love concentrates all that is best in human nature. The man does not exist who cannot be witty to

avenge himself; and, by the same rule, there is not one to whom love does not bring delight. Cheap and easy as this kind of wit may be in France, it is always relished. Lucien's article was destined to raise the previous reputation of the paper for venomous spite and evil-speaking. His article probed two hearts to the depths; it dealt a grievous wound to Mme. de Bargeton, his Laura of old days, as well as to his rival, the Baron du Châtelet.

"Well, let us go for a drive in the Bois," said Coralie, "the horses are fidgeting. There is no need to kill yourself."

"We will take the article on Nathan to Hector. Journalism is really very much like Achilles' lance, it salves the wounds that it makes," said Lucien, correcting a phrase here and there.

The lovers started forth in splendor to show themselves to the Paris which had but lately given Lucien the cold shoulder, and now was beginning to talk about him. To have Paris talking of you! and this after you have learned how large the great city is, how hard it is to be anybody there—it was this thought that turned Lucien's head with exultation.

"Let us go by way of your tailor's, dear boy, and tell him to be quick with your clothes, or try them on if they are ready. If you are going to your fine ladies' houses, you shall eclipse that monster of a de Marsay and young Rastignac and any Ajuda-Pinto or Maxime de Trailles or Vandenesse of them all. Remember that your mistress is Coralie! But you will not play me any tricks, eh?"

Two days afterwards, on the eve of the supper party at Coralie's house, there was a new play at the Ambigu, and it fell to Lucien to write the dramatic criticism. Lucien and Coralie walked together after dinner from the Rue de Vendôme to the Panorama-Dramatique, going along the Café Turc side of the Boulevard du Temple, a lounge much frequented at that time. People wondered at his luck, and praised Coralie's beauty. Chance remarks reached his ears; some said that Coralie was the finest woman in Paris, others that Lucien was a match for her. The romantic youth felt

that he was in his atmosphere. This was the life for him. The brotherhood was so far away that it was almost out of sight. Only two months ago, how he had looked up to those lofty great natures; now he asked himself if they were not just a trifle ridiculous with their notions and their Puritanism. Coralie's careless words had lodged in Lucien's mind, and begun already to bear fruit. He took Coralie to her dressing-room, and strolled about like a sultan behind the scenes; the actresses gave him burning glances and flattering speeches.

"I must go to the Ambigu and attend to business," said he.

At the Ambigu the house was full; there was not a seat left for him. Indignant complaints behind the scenes brought no redress; the box office keeper, who did not know him as yet, said that they had sent orders for two boxes to his paper, and sent him about his business.

"I shall speak of the play as I find it," said Lucien, nettled at this.

"What a dunce you are!" said the leading lady, addressing the box office keeper, "that is Coralie's adorer."

The box office keeper turned round immediately at this. "I will speak to the manager at once, sir," he said.

In all these small details Lucien saw the immense power wielded by the press. His vanity was gratified. The manager appeared to say that the Duc de Rhétoré and Tullia the opera dancer were in the stage box, and they had consented to allow Lucien to join them.

"You have driven two people to distraction," remarked the young Duke, mentioning the names of the Baron du Châtelet and Mme. de Bargeton.

"Distraction? What will it be to-morrow?" said Lucien. "So far, my friends have been mere skirmishers, but I have given them red-hot shot to-night. To-morrow you will know why we are making game of 'Potelet.' The article is called 'Potelet from 1811 to 1821.' Châtelet will be a byword, a name for the type of courtier who deny their benefactor and rally to the Bourbons. When I have done with him, I am going to Mme. de Montcornet's."

Lucien's talk was sparkling. He was eager that this great personage should see how gross a mistake Mmes. d'Espard and de Bargeton had made when they slighted Lucien de Rubempré. But he showed the tip of his ear when he asserted his right to bear the name of Rubempré, the Duc de Rhétoré having purposely addressed him as Chardon.

"You should go over to the Royalists," said the Duke. "You have proved yourself a man of ability; now show your good sense. The one way of obtaining a patent of nobility and the right to bear the title of your mother's family, is by asking for it in return for services to be rendered to the Court. The Liberals will never make a count of you. The Restoration will get the better of the press, you see, in the long run, and the press is the only formidable power. They have borne with it too long as it is; the press is sure to be muzzled. Take advantage of the last moments of liberty to make yourself formidable, and you will have everything—intellect, nobility, and good looks; nothing will be out of your reach. So if you are a Liberal, let it be simply for the moment, so that you can make a better bargain for your Royalism."

With that the Duke entreated Lucien to accept an invitation to dinner, which the German Minister (of Florine's supper party) was about to send. Lucien fell under the charm of the noble peer's arguments; the salons from which he had been exiled forever, as he thought, but a few months ago, would shortly open their doors for him! He was delighted. He marveled at the power of the press; Intellect and the Press, these then were the real powers in society. Another thought shaped itself in his mind—Was Étienne Lousteau sorry that he had opened the gate of the temple to a newcomer? Even now he (Lucien) felt on his own account that it was strongly advisable to put difficulties in the way of eager and ambitious recruits from the provinces. If a poet should come to him as he had flung himself into Étienne's arms, he dared not think of the reception that he would give him.

The youthful Duke meanwhile saw that Lucien was deep

in thought, and made a pretty good guess at the matter of his meditations. He himself had opened out wide horizons of public life before an ambitious poet, with a vacillating will, it is true, but not without aspirations; and the journalists had already shown the neophyte, from a pinnacle of the temple, all the kingdoms of the world of letters and its riches.

Lucien himself had no suspicion of a little plot that was being woven, nor did he imagine that M. de Rhétoré had a hand in it. M. de Rhétoré had spoken of Lucien's cleverness, and Mme. d'Espard's set had taken alarm. Mme. de Bargeton had commissioned the Duke to sound Lucien, and with that object in view, the noble youth had come to the Ambigu-Comique.

Do not believe in stories of elaborate treachery. Neither the great world nor the world of journalists laid any deep schemes; definite plans are not made by either; their Machiavelism lives from hand to mouth, so to speak, and consists, for the most part, in being always on the spot, always on the alert to turn everything to account, always on the watch for the moment when a man's ruling passion shall deliver him into the hands of his enemies. The young Duke had seen through Lucien at Florine's supper party; he had just touched his vain susceptibilities; and now he was trying his first efforts in diplomacy upon the living subject.

Lucien hurried to the Rue Saint-Fiacre after the play to write his article. It was a piece of savage and bitter criticism, written in pure wantonness; he was amusing himself by trying his power. The melodrama, as a matter of fact, was a better piece than the *Alcalde*; but Lucien wished to see whether he could damn a good play and send everybody to see a bad one, as his associates had said.

He unfolded the sheet at breakfast next morning, telling Coralie as he did so that he had cut up the Ambigu-Comique; and not a little astonished was he to find below his paper on Mme. de Bargeton and Châtelet a notice of the Ambigu, so mellowed and softened in the course of the night, that although the witty analysis was still preserved, the judgment was favorable. The article was more likely to fill

the house than to empty it. No words can describe his wrath. He determined to have a word or two with Lousteau. He had begun already to think himself an indispensable man, and he vowed that he would not submit to be tyrannized over and treated like a fool. To establish his power beyond cavil, he wrote the article for Dauriat's review, summing up and weighing all the various opinions concerning Nathan's book; and while he was in the humor, he hit off another of his short sketches for Lousteau's newspaper. Inexperienced journalists, in the first effervescence of youth, make a labor of love of ephemeral work, and lavish their best thought unthriftilly thereon.

The manager of the Panorama-Dramatique gave a first performance of a vaudeville that night, so that Florine and Coralie might be free for the evening. There were to be cards before supper. Lousteau came for the short notice of the vaudeville; it had been written beforehand after the general rehearsal, for Étienne wished to have the paper off his mind. Lucien read over one of the charming sketches of Parisian whimsicalities which made the fortune of the paper, and Lousteau kissed him on both eyelids, and called him the providence of journalism.

"Then why do you amuse yourself by turning my article inside out?" asked Lucien. He had written his brilliant sketch simply and solely to give emphasis to his grievance.

"I?" exclaimed Lousteau.

"Well, who else can have altered my article?"

"You do not know all the ins and outs yet, dear fellow. The Ambigu pays for thirty copies, and only takes nine for the manager and box office keeper and their mistresses, and for the three lessees of the theater. Every one of the boulevard theaters pays eight hundred francs in this way to the paper; and there is quite as much again in boxes and orders for Finot, to say nothing of the contributions of the company. And if the minor theaters do this, you may imagine what the big ones do! Now you understand? We are bound to show a good deal of indulgence."

"I understand this, that I am not at liberty to write as I think——"



"Eh! what does that matter, so long as you turn an honest penny?" cried Lousteau. "Besides, my boy, what grudge had you against the theater? You must have had some reason for it, or you would not have cut up the play as you did. If you slash for the sake of slashing, the paper will get into trouble, and when there is good reason for hitting hard it will not tell. Did the manager leave you out in the cold?"

"He had not kept a place for me."

"Good," said Lousteau. "I shall let him see your article, and tell him that I softened it down; you will find it serve you better than if it had appeared in print. Go and ask him for tickets to-morrow, and he will sign forty blank orders every month. I know a man who can get rid of them for you; I will introduce you to him, and he will buy them all up at half price. There is a trade done in theater tickets, just as Barbet trades in reviewers' copies. This is another Barbet, the leader of the *claque*. He lives near by; come and see him, there is time enough."

"But, my dear fellow, it is a scandalous thing that Finot should levy blackmail in matters intellectual. Sooner or later——"

"Really!" cried Lousteau, "where do you come from? For what do you take Finot? Beneath his pretense of good nature, his ignorance and stupidity, and those Turcaret's airs of his, there is all the cunning of his father the hatter. Did you notice an old soldier of the Empire in the den at the office? That is Finot's uncle. The uncle is not only one of the right sort, he has the luck to be taken for a fool; and he takes all that kind of business upon his shoulders. An ambitious man in Paris is well off indeed if he has a willing scapegoat at hand. In public life, as in journalism, there are hosts of emergencies in which the chiefs cannot afford to appear. If Finot should enter on a political career, his uncle would be his secretary, and receive all the contributions levied in his department on big affairs. Anybody would take Giroudeau for a fool at first sight, but he has just enough shrewdness to be an inscrutable old file. He is on picket duty; he sees that we are not

pestered with hubbub, beginners wanting a job, or advertisements. No other paper has his equal, I think."

"He plays his part well," said Lucien; "I saw him at work."

Étienne and Lucien reached a handsome house in the Rue du Faubourg-du-Temple.

"Is M. Braulard in?" Étienne asked of the porter.

"*Monsieur?*" said Lucien. "Then, is the leader of the *claque* '*Monsieur*'?"

"My dear boy, Braulard has twenty thousand francs of income. All the dramatic authors of the boulevards are in his clutches, and have a standing account with him as if he were a banker. Orders and complimentary tickets are sold here. Braulard knows where to get rid of such merchandise. Now for a turn at statistics, a useful science enough in its way. At the rate of fifty complimentary tickets every evening for each theater, you have two hundred and fifty tickets daily. Suppose, taking one with another, that they are worth a couple of francs apiece, Braulard pays a hundred and twenty-five francs daily for them, and takes his chance of making cent. per cent. In this way authors' tickets alone bring him in about four thousand francs every month, or forty-eight thousand francs per annum. Allow twenty thousand francs for loss, for he cannot always place all his tickets——"

"Why not?"

"Oh! the people who pay at the door go in with the holders of complimentary tickets for unreserved seats, and the theater reserves the right of admitting those who pay. There are fine warm evenings to be reckoned with besides, and poor plays. Braulard makes, perhaps, thirty thousand francs every year in this way, and he has his *claqueurs* besides, another industry. Florine and Coralie pay tribute to him; if they did not, there would be no applause when they come on or go off."

Lousteau gave this explanation in a low voice as they went up the stair.

"Paris is a queer place," said Lucien; it seemed to him that he saw self-interest squatting in every corner.

A smart maidservant opened the door. At the sight of Étienne Lousteau, the dealer in orders and tickets rose from a study chair before a large cylinder desk, and Lucien beheld the leader of the *claque*, Braulard himself, dressed in a gray molleton jacket, footed trousers, and red slippers; for all the world like a doctor or a solicitor. He was a typical self-made man, Lucien thought—a vulgar-looking face with a pair of exceedingly cunning gray eyes, hands made for hired applause, a complexion over which hard living had passed like rain over a roof, grizzled hair, and a somewhat husky voice.

"You have come from Mlle. Florine, no doubt, sir, and this gentleman for Mlle. Coralie," said Braulard; "I know you very well by sight. Don't you trouble yourself, sir," he continued, addressing Lucien; "I am buying the Gymnase connection, I will look after your lady, and I will give her notice of any tricks they may try to play on her."

"That is not an offer to be refused, my dear Braulard, but we have come about the press orders for the boulevard theaters—I as editor, and this gentleman as dramatic critic."

"Oh!—ah, yes! Finot has sold his paper. I heard about it. He is getting on, is Finot. I have asked him to dine with me at the end of the week; if you will do me the honor and pleasure of coming, you may bring your ladies, and there will be a grand jollification. Adèle Dupuis is coming, and Ducange, and Frédéric du Petit-Méré, and Mlle. Millot, my mistress. We shall have good fun and better liquor."

"Ducange must be in difficulties. He has lost his lawsuit."

"I have lent him ten thousand francs; if *Calas* succeeds, it will repay the loan, so I have been organizing a success. Ducange is a clever man; he has brains——"

Lucien fancied that he must be dreaming when he heard a *claqueur* appraising a writer's value.

"Coralie has improved," continued Braulard, with the air of a competent critic. "If she is a good girl, I will take her part, for they have got up a cabal against her at the Gymnase. This is how I mean to do it. I will have a few well-dressed men in the balconies to smile and make little

murmurs, and the applause will follow. That is a dodge which makes a position for an actress. I have a liking for Coralie, and you ought to be satisfied, for she has feeling. Aha! I can hiss anyone on the stage if I like."

"But let us settle this business about the tickets," put in Lousteau.

"Very well, I will come to this gentleman's lodging for them at the beginning of the month. He is a friend of yours, and I will treat him as I do you. You have five theaters; you will get thirty tickets—that will be something like seventy-five francs a month. Perhaps you will be wanting an advance?" added Braulard, lifting a cash-box full of coin out of his desk.

"No, no," said Lousteau; "we will keep that shift against a rainy day."

"I will work with Coralie, sir, and we will come to an understanding," said Braulard, addressing Lucien, who was looking about him, not without profound astonishment. There was a bookcase in Braulard's study, there were framed engravings and good furniture; and as they passed through the drawing-room, he noticed that the fittings were neither too luxurious nor yet mean. The dining-room seemed to be the best-ordered room, he remarked on this jokingly.

"But Braulard is an epicure," said Lousteau; "his diners are famous in dramatic literature, and they are what you might expect from his cash-box."

"I have good wine," Braulard replied modestly.—"Ah! here are my lamplighters," he added, as a sound of hoarse voices and strange footsteps came up from the staircase.

Lucien on his way down saw a march past of *claqueurs* and retailers of tickets. It was an ill-smelling squad, attired in caps, seedy trousers, and threadbare overcoats; a flock of gallows-birds with bluish and greenish tints in their faces, neglected beards, and a strange mixture of savagery and subservience in their eyes. A horrible population lives and swarms upon the Paris boulevards; selling watch guards and brass jewelry in the streets by day, applauding under the chandeliers of the theater at night, and ready to lend themselves to any dirty business in the great city.

"Behold the Romans!" laughed Lousteau; "behold fame incarnate for actresses and dramatic authors. It is no prettier than our own when you come to look at it close."

"It is difficult to keep illusions on any subject in Paris," answered Lucien as they turned in at his door. "There is a tax upon everything—everything has its price, and anything can be made to order—even success."

Thirty guests were assembled that evening in Coralie's rooms; her dining-room would not hold more. Lucien had asked Dauriat and the manager of the Panorama-Dramatique, Matifat and Florine, Camusot, Lousteau, Finot, Nathan, Hector Merlin and Mme. du Val-Noble, Félicien Vernou, Blondet, Vignon, Philippe Bridau, Mariette, Giroudeau, Cardot and Florentine, and Bixiou. He had also asked all his friends of the Rue des Quatre-Vents. Tullia the dancer, who was not unkind, said gossip, to du Bruel, had come without her duke. The proprietors of the newspapers, for whom most of the journalists wrote, were also of the party.

At eight o'clock, when the light of the candles in the chandeliers shone over the furniture, the hangings, and the flowers, the rooms wore the festal air that gives to Parisian luxury the appearance of a dream; and Lucien felt indefinable stirrings of hope and gratified vanity and pleasure at the thought that he was the master of the house. But how and by whom the magic wand had been waved he no longer sought to remember. Florine and Coralie, dressed with the fanciful extravagance and magnificent artistic effect of the stage, smiled on the poet like two fairies at the gates of the Palace of Dreams. And Lucien was almost in a dream.

His life had been changed so suddenly during the last few months; he had gone so swiftly from the depths of penury to the last extreme of luxury, that at moments he felt as uncomfortable as a dreaming man who knows that he is asleep. And yet, he looked round at the fair reality about him with a confidence to which envious minds might have given the name of fatuity.

Lucien himself had changed. He had grown paler dur-

ing these days of continual enjoyment; languor had lent a humid look to his eyes; in short, to use Mme. d'Espard's expression, he looked like a man who is loved. He was the handsomer for it. Consciousness of his powers and his strength was visible in his face, enlightened as it was by love and experience. Looking out over the world of letters and of men, it seemed to him that he might go to and fro as lord of it all. Sober reflection never entered his romantic head unless it was driven in by the pressure of adversity, and just now the present held not a care for him. The breath of praise swelled the sails of his skiff; all the instruments of success lay there to his hand; he had an establishment, a mistress whom all Paris envied him, a carriage, and untold wealth in his inkstand. Heart and soul and brain were alike transformed within him; why should he care to be overnice about the means, when the great results were visibly there before his eyes?

As such a style of living will seem, and with good reason, to be anything but secure to economists who have any experience of Paris, it will not be superfluous to give a glance to the foundation, uncertain as it was, upon which the prosperity of the pair was based.

Camusot had given Coralie's tradesmen instructions to grant her credit for three months at least, and this had been done without her knowledge. During those three months, therefore, horses and servants, like everything else, waited as if by enchantment at the bidding of two children, eager for enjoyment, and enjoying to their hearts' content.

Coralie had taken Lucien's hand and given him a glimpse of the transformation scene in the dining-room, of the splendidly appointed table, of chandeliers, each fitted with forty wax-lights, of the royally luxurious dessert, and a menu of Chevet's. Lucien kissed her on the forehead and held her closely to his heart.

"I shall succeed, child," he said, "and then I will repay you for such love and devotion."

"Pshaw!" said Coralie. "Are you satisfied?"

"I should be very hard to please if I were not."

"Very well, then, that smile of yours pays for everything,"

she said, and with a serpentine movement she raised her head and laid her lips against his.

When they went back to the others, Florine, Lousteau, Matifat, and Camusot were setting out the card tables. Lucien's friends began to arrive, for already these folk began to call themselves "Lucien's friends"; and they sat over the cards from nine o'clock till midnight. Lucien was unacquainted with a single game, but Lousteau lost a thousand francs, and Lucien could not refuse to lend him the money when he asked for it.

Michel, Fulgence, and Joseph appeared about ten o'clock; and Lucien, chatting with them in a corner, saw that they looked sober and serious enough, not to say ill at ease. D'Arthez could not come, he was finishing his book; Léon Giraud was busy with the first number of his review; so the brotherhood had sent the three artists among their number, thinking that they would feel less out of their element in an uproarious supper party than the rest.

"Well, my dear fellows," said Lucien, assuming a slightly patronizing tone, "the 'comical fellow' may become a great public character yet, you see."

"I wish I may be mistaken; I don't ask better," said Michel.

"Are you living with Coralie until you can do better?" asked Fulgence.

"Yes," said Lucien, trying to look unconscious. "Coralie had an elderly adorer, a merchant, and she showed him the door, poor fellow. I am better off than your brother Philippe," he added, addressing Joseph Bridau; "he does not know how to manage Mariette."

"You are a man like another now; in short, you will make your way," said Fulgence.

"A man that will always be the same for you, under all circumstances," returned Lucien.

Michel and Fulgence exchanged incredulous scornful smiles at this. Lucien saw the absurdity of his remark.

"Coralie is wonderfully beautiful," exclaimed Joseph Bridau. "What a magnificent portrait she would make!"

"Beautiful and good," said Lucien; "she is an angel,

upon my word. And you shall paint her portrait; she shall sit to you if you like for your Venetian lady brought by the old woman to the senator."

"All women who love are angelic," said Michel Chrestien. Just at that moment Raoul Nathan flew upon Lucien, and grasped both his hands and shook them in a sudden access of violent friendship.

"Oh, my good friend, you are something more than a great man, you have a heart," cried he, "a much rarer thing than genius in these days. You are a devoted friend. I am yours, in short, through thick and thin; I shall never forget all that you have done for me this week."

Lucien's joy had reached the highest point; to be thus caressed by a man of whom everyone was talking! He looked at his three friends of the brotherhood with something like a superior air. Nathan's appearance upon the scene was the result of an overture from Merlin, who sent him a proof of the favorable review to appear in to-morrow's issue.

"I only consented to write the attack on condition that I should be allowed to reply to it myself," Lucien said in Nathan's ear. "I am one of you." This incident was opportune; it justified the remark which amused Fulgence. Lucien was radiant.

"When d'Arthez's book comes out," he said, turning to the three, "I am in a position to be useful to him. That thought in itself would induce me to remain a journalist."

"Can you do as you like?" Michel asked quickly.

"So far as one can when one is indispensable," said Lucien modestly.

It was almost midnight when they sat down to supper, and the fun grew fast and furious. Talk was less restrained in Lucien's house than at Matifat's, for no one suspected that the representatives of the brotherhood and the newspaper writers held divergent opinions. Young intellects, depraved by arguing for either side, now came into conflict with each other, and fearful axioms of the journalistic jurisprudence, then in its infancy, hurtled to and fro. Claude Vignon, upholding the dignity of criticism, inveighed against



the tendency of the smaller newspapers, saying that the writers of personalities lowered themselves in the end. Lousteau, Merlin, and Finot took up the cudgels for the system known by the name of *blague*; puffery, gossip, and humbug, said they, was the test of talent, and set the hall-mark, as it were, upon it. "Any man who can stand that test has real power," said Lousteau.

"Besides," cried Merlin, "when a great man receives ovations, there ought to be a chorus of insults to balance, as in a Roman triumph."

"Oho!" put in Lucien; "then everyone held up to ridicule in print will fancy that he has made a success."

"Anyone would think that the question interested you," exclaimed Finot.

"And how about our sonnets," said Michel Chrestien; "is that the way they will win us the fame of a second Petrarch?"

"Laura already counts for something in his fame," said Dauriat, a pun<sup>1</sup> received with acclamations.

"*Faciamus experimentum in anima vili*," retorted Lucien with a smile.

"And woe unto him whom reviewers shall spare, flinging him crowns at his first appearance, for he shall be shelved like the saints in their shrines, and no man shall pay him the slightest attention," said Vernou.

"People will say, 'Look elsewhere, simpleton; you have had your due already,' as Champcenetz said to the Marquis de Genlis, who was looking too fondly at his wife," added Blondet.

"Success is the ruin of a man in France," said Finot. "We are so jealous of one another that we try to forget, and to make others forget, the triumphs of yesterday."

"Contradiction is the life of literature, in fact," said Claude Vignon.

"In art as in nature, there are two principles everywhere at strife," exclaimed Fulgence; "and victory for either means death."

"So it is with politics," added Michel Chrestien.

<sup>1</sup> Laure (l'or).

"We have a case in point," said Lousteau. "Dauriat will sell a couple of thousand copies of Nathan's book in the coming week. And why? Because the book that was cleverly attacked will be ably defended."

Merlin took up the proof of to-morrow's paper. "How can such an article fail to sell an edition?" he asked.

"Read the article," said Dauriat. "I am a publisher wherever I am, even at supper."

Merlin read Lucien's triumphant refutation aloud, and the whole party applauded.

"How could that article have been written unless the attack had preceded it?" asked Lousteau.

Dauriat drew the proof of the third article from his pocket and read it over, Finot listening closely; for it was to appear in the second number of his own review, and as editor he exaggerated his enthusiasm.

"Gentlemen," said he, "so and not otherwise would Bossuet have written if he had lived in our day."

"I am sure of it," said Merlin. "Bossuet would have been a journalist to-day."

"To Bossuet the Second!" cried Claude Vignon, raising his glass with an ironical bow.

"To my Christopher Columbus!" returned Lucien, drinking a health to Dauriat.

"Bravo!" cried Nathan.

"Is it a nickname?" Merlin inquired, looking maliciously from Finot to Lucien.

"If you go on at this pace, you will be quite beyond us," said Dauriat; "these gentlemen" (indicating Camusot and Matifat) "cannot follow you as it is. A joke is like a bit of thread; if it is spun too fine, it breaks, as Bonaparte said."

"Gentlemen," said Lousteau, "we have been eyewitnesses of a strange, portentous, unheard-of, and truly surprising phenomenon. Admire the rapidity with which our friend here has been transformed from a provincial into a journalist!"

"He is a born journalist," said Dauriat.

"Children!" called Finot, rising to his feet, "all of us

here present have encouraged and protected our Amphytrion in his entrance upon a career in which he has already surpassed our hopes. In two months he has shown us what he can do in a series of excellent articles known to us all. I propose to baptize him in form as a journalist."

"A crown of roses! to signalize a double conquest," cried Bixiou, glancing at Coralie.

Coralie made a sign to Bérénice. That portly handmaid went to Coralie's dressing-room and brought back a box of tumbled artificial flowers. The more incapable members of the party were grotesquely tricked out in these blossoms, and a crown of roses was soon woven. Finot, as high priest, sprinkled a few drops of champagne on Lucien's golden curls, pronouncing with delicious gravity the words—"In the name of the Government Stamp, the Caution-money, and the Fine, I baptize thee, Journalist. May thy articles sit lightly on thee!"

"And may they be paid for, including white lines!" cried Merlin.

Just at that moment Lucien caught sight of three melancholy faces. Michel Chrestien, Joseph Bridau, and Fulgence Ridal took up their hats and went out amid a storm of invective.

"Queer customers!" said Merlin.

"Fulgence used to be a good fellow," added Lousteau, "before they perverted his morals."

"Who are 'they'?" asked Claude Vignon.

"Some very serious young men," said Blondet, "who meet at a philosophico-religious symposium in the Rue des Quatre-Vents, and worry themselves about the meaning of human life——"

"Oh! oh!"

"They are trying to find out whether it goes round in a circle, or makes some progress," continued Blondet. They were very hard put to it between the straight line and the curve; the triangle, warranted by Scripture, seemed to them to be nonsense, when, lo! there arose among them some prophet or other who declared for the spiral."

"Men might meet to invent more dangerous nonsense than

that!" exclaimed Lucien, making a faint attempt to champion the brotherhood.

"You take theories of that sort for idle words," said Félicien Vernou; "but a time comes when the arguments take the form of gunshot and the guillotine."

"They have not come to that yet," said Bixiou; "they have only come as far as the designs of Providence in the invention of champagne, the humanitarian significance of breeches, and the blind deity who keeps the world going. They pick up fallen great men like Vico, Saint-Simon, and Fourier. I am much afraid that they will turn poor Joseph Bridau's head among them."

"Bianchon, my old schoolfellow, gives me the cold shoulder now," said Lousteau; "it is all their doing——"

"Do they give lectures on orthopedy and intellectual gymnastics?" asked Merlin.

"Very likely," answered Finot, "if Bianchon has any hand in their theories."

"Pshaw!" said Lousteau; "he will be a great physician anyhow."

"Isn't d'Arthez their visible head?" asked Nathan, "a little youngster that is going to swallow all of us up."

"He is a genius!" cried Lucien.

"Genius; is he! Well, give me a glass of sherry!" said Claude Vignon, smiling.

Everyone, thereupon, began to explain his character for the benefit of his neighbor; and when a clever man feels a pressing need of explaining himself, and of unlocking his heart, it is pretty clear that wine has got the upper hand. An hour later, all the men in the company were the best of friends in the world, addressing each other as great men and bold spirits, who held the future in their hands. Lucien, in his quality of host, was sufficiently clear-headed to apprehend the meaning of the sophistries which impressed him and completed his demoralization.

"The Liberal party," announced Finot, "is compelled to stir up discussion somehow. There is no fault to find with the action of the Government, and you may imagine what a fix the Opposition is in. Which of you now cares to

write a pamphlet in favor of the system of primogeniture, and raise a cry against the secret designs of the Court? The pamphlet will be paid for handsomely."

"I will write it," said Hector Merlin. "It is my own point of view."

"Your party will complain that you are compromising them," said Finot. "Félicien, you must undertake it; Dau-riat will bring it out, and we will keep the secret."

"How much shall I get?"

"Six hundred francs. Sign it 'Le Comte C, three stars.'"

"It's a bargain," said Félicien Vernou.

"So you are introducing the *canard* to the political world," remarked Lousteau.

"It is simply the Chabot affair carried into the region of abstract ideas," said Finot. "Fasten intentions on the Government, and then let loose public opinion."

"How a Government can leave the control of ideas to such a pack of scamps as we are, is matter for perpetual and profound astonishment to me," said Claude Vignon.

"If the Ministry blunders so far as to come down into the arena, we can give them a drubbing. If they are nettled by it, the thing will rankle in people's minds, and the Government will lose its hold on the masses. The newspaper risks nothing, and the authorities have everything to lose."

"France will be a cipher until newspapers are abolished by law," said Claude Vignon. "You are making progress hourly," he added, addressing Finot. "You are a modern order of Jesuits, lacking the creed, the fixed idea, the discipline, and the union."

They went back to the card tables; and before long the light of the candles grew feeble in the dawn.

"Lucien, your friends from the Rue des Quatre-Vents looked as dismal as criminals going to be hanged," said Coralie.

"They were the judges, not the criminals," replied her poet.

"Judges are more amusing than *that*," said Mme. Coralie.

For a month Lucien's whole time was taken up with supper parties, dinner engagements, breakfasts, and evening parties; he was swept away by an irresistible current into a vortex of dissipation and easy work. He no longer thought of the future. The power of calculation amid the complications of life is the sign of a strong will which poets, weaklings, and men who live a purely intellectual life can never counterfeited. Lucien was living from hand to mouth, spending his money as fast as he made it, like many another journalist; nor did he give so much as a thought to those periodically recurrent days of reckoning which chequer the life of the bohemian in Paris so sadly.

In dress and figure he was a rival for the great dandies of the day. Coralie, like all zealots, loved to adorn her idol. She ruined herself to give her beloved poet the accouterments which had so stirred his envy in the Garden of the Tuileries. Lucien had wonderful canes, and a charming eyeglass; he had diamond studs, and scarf-rings, and signet-rings, besides an assortment of waistcoats marvelous to behold, and in sufficient number to match every color in a variety of costumes. His transition to the estate of dandy swiftly followed. When he went to the German Minister's dinner, all the young men regarded him with suppressed envy; yet de Marsay, Vandenesse, Ajuda-Pinto, Maxime de Trailles, Rastignac, Beaudenord, Manerville, and the Duc de Maufrigneuse gave place to none in the kingdom of fashion. Men of fashion are as jealous among themselves as women, and in the same way. Lucien was placed between Mme. de Montcornet and Mme. d'Espard, in whose honor the dinner was given; both ladies overwhelmed him with flatteries.

"Why did you turn your back on society when you would have been so well received?" asked the Marquise. "Everyone was prepared to make much of you. And I have a quarrel with you too. You owed me a call—I am still waiting to receive it. I saw you at the Opéra the other day, and you would not deign to come to see me nor to take any notice of me."

"Your cousin, madame, so unmistakably dismissed me——"

"Oh! you do not know women," the Marquise d'Espard broke in upon him. "You have wounded the most angelic heart, the noblest nature that I know. You do not know all that Louise was trying to do for you, nor how tactfully she laid her plans for you.—Oh! and she would have succeeded," the Marquise continued, replying to Lucien's mute incredulity. "Her husband is dead now; died, as he was bound to die, of an indigestion; could you doubt that she would be free sooner or later? And can you suppose that she would like to be Mme. Chardon? It was worth while to take some trouble to gain the title of Comtesse de Rubempré. Love, you see, is a great vanity, which requires the lesser vanities to be in harmony with itself—especially in marriage. I might love you to madness—which is to say, sufficiently to marry you—and yet I should find it very unpleasant to be called Mme. Chardon. You can see that. And now that you understand the difficulties of Paris life, you will know how many roundabout ways you must take to reach your end; very well, then, you must admit that Louise was aspiring to an all but impossible piece of Court favor; she was quite unknown, she is not rich, and therefore she could not afford to neglect any means of success.

"You are clever," the Marquise d'Espard continued; "but we women, when we love, are cleverer than the cleverest man. My cousin tried to make that absurd Châtelet useful—Oh!" she broke off, "I owe not a little amusement to you; your articles on Châtelet made me laugh heartily."

Lucien knew not what to think of all this. Of the treachery and bad faith of journalism he had had some experience; but in spite of his perspicacity, he scarcely expected to find bad faith or treachery in society. There were some sharp lessons in store for him.

"But, madame," he objected, for her words aroused a lively curiosity, "is not the Heron under your protection?"

"One is obliged to be civil to one's worst enemies in society," protested she; "one may be bored, but one must look as if the talk was amusing, and not seldom one seems to sacrifice friends the better to serve them. Are you still a novice? You mean to write, and yet you know nothing

of current deceit? My cousin apparently sacrificed you to the Heron, but how could she dispense with his influence for you? Our friend stands well with the present Ministry; and we have made him see that your attacks will do him service—up to a certain point, for we want you to make it up again some of these days. Châtelet has received compensations for his troubles; for, as des Lupeaulx said, ‘While the newspapers are making Châtelet ridiculous, they will leave the Ministry in peace.’”

There was a pause; the Marquise left Lucien to his own reflections.

“M. Blondet led me to hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you in my house,” said the Comtesse de Montcornet. “You will meet a few artists and men of letters, and someone else who has the keenest desire to become acquainted with you—Mlle. des Touches, the owner of talents rare among our sex. You will go to her house, no doubt. Mlle. des Touches (or Camille Maupin, if you prefer it) is prodigiously rich, and presides over one of the most remarkable salons in Paris. She has heard that you are as handsome as you are clever, and is dying to meet you.”

Lucien could only pour out incoherent thanks and glance enviously at Émile Blondet. There was as great a difference between a great lady like Mme. de Montcornet and Coralie as between Coralie and a girl out of the streets. The Countess was young and witty and beautiful, with the very white fairness of women of the North. Her mother was the Princess Scherbelloff, and the Minister before dinner had paid her the most respectful attention.

By this time the Marquise had made an end of trifling disdainfully with the wing of a chicken.

“My poor Louise felt so much affection for you,” she said. “She took me into her confidence; I knew her dreams of a great career for you. She would have borne a great deal, but what scorn you showed her when you sent back her letters! Cruelty we can forgive; those who hurt us must have still some faith in us; but indifference! Indifference is like polar snows, it extinguishes all life. So, you must see that you have lost a precious affection through



your own fault. Why break with her? Even if she had scorned you, you had your way to make, had you not?—your name to win back? Louise thought of all that.”

“Then why was she silent?”

“*Eh! mon Dieu!*” cried the Marquise, “it was I myself who advised her not to take you into her confidence. Between ourselves, you know, you seemed so little used to the ways of the world, that I took alarm. I was afraid that your inexperience and rash ardor might wreck our carefully made schemes. Can you recollect yourself as you were then? You must admit that if you could see your double to-day, you would say the same yourself. You are not like the same man. That was our one mistake. But would one man in a thousand combine such intellectual gifts with such a wonderful aptitude for taking the tone of society? I did not think that you would be such an astonishing exception. You were transformed so quickly, you acquired the manner of Paris so easily, that I did not recognize you in the Bois de Boulogne a month ago.”

Lucien heard the great lady with inexpressible pleasure; the flatteries were spoken with such a petulant, child-like, confiding air, and she seemed to take such a deep interest in him, that he thought of his first evening at the Panorama-Dramatique, and began to fancy that some such miracle was about to take place a second time. Everything had smiled upon him since that happy evening; his youth, he thought, was the talisman that worked this change. He would prove this great lady; she should not take him at unawares.

“Then, what were these schemes which have turned to chimeras, madame?” asked he.

“Louise meant to obtain a royal patent permitting you to bear the name and title of Rubempré. She wished to put Chardon out of sight. Your opinions have put that out of the question now, but *then* it would not have been so hard to manage, and a title would mean a fortune for you.

“You will look on these things as trifles and visionary ideas,” she continued; “but we know something of life, and we know, too, all the solid advantages of a count’s title when it is borne by a fashionable and extremely charming

young man. Announce 'M. Chardon' and 'M. le Comte de Rubempré' before heiresses or English girls with a million to their fortune, and note the difference of the effect. The Count might be in debt, but he would find open hearts; his good looks, brought into relief by his title, would be like a diamond in a rich setting; M. Chardon would not be so much as noticed. *We* have not invented these notions; they are everywhere in the world, even among the bourgeois. You are turning your back on fortune at this minute. Do you see that good-looking young man? He is the Vicomte Félix de Vandenesse, one of the King's private secretaries. The King is fond enough of young men of talent, and Vandenesse came from the provinces with baggage nearly as light as yours. You are a thousand times cleverer than he; but do you belong to a great family, have you a name? You know des Lupeaulx; his name is very much like yours, for he was born a Chardin; well, he would not sell his little farm of Lupeaulx for a million, he will be Comte des Lupeaulx some day, and perhaps his grandson may be a duke. —You have made a false start; and if you continue in that way, it will be all over with you. See how much wiser M. Émile Blondet has been! He is engaged on a Government newspaper; he is well looked on by those in authority; he can afford to mix with Liberals, for he holds sound opinions; and sooner or later he will succeed. But then he understood how to choose his opinions and his protectors.

"Your charming neighbor" (Mme. d'Espard glanced at Mme. de Montcornet) "was a Troisième; there are two peers of France in the family and two deputies. She made a wealthy marriage with her name; she sees a great deal of society at her house; she has influence, she will move the political world for young M. Blondet. Where will a Coralie take you? In a few years' time you will be hopelessly in debt and weary of pleasure. You have chosen badly in love, and you are arranging your life ill. The woman whom you delight to wound was at the Opéra the other night, and this was how she spoke of you. She deplored the way in which you were throwing away your talent and the prime of youth; she was thinking of you, and not of herself, all the while."

"Ah! if only you were telling me truth, madame!" cried Lucien.

"What object should I have in telling lies?" returned the Marquise, with a glance of cold disdain which annihilated him. He was so dashed by it that the conversation dropped, for the Marquise was offended, and said no more.

Lucien was nettled by her silence, but he felt that it was due to his own clumsiness, and promised himself that he would repair his error. He turned to Mme. de Montcornet and talked to her of Blondet, extolling that young writer for her benefit. The Countess was gracious to him, and asked him (at a sign from Mme. d'Espard) to spend an evening at her house. It was to be a small and quiet gathering to which only friends were invited—Mme. de Bargeton would be there in spite of her mourning; Lucien would be pleased, she was sure, to meet Mme. de Bargeton.

"Mme. la Marquise says that all the wrong is on my side," said Lucien; "so surely it rests with her cousin, does it not, to decide whether she will meet me?"

"Put an end to those ridiculous attacks, which only couple her name with the name of a man for whom she does not care at all, and you will soon sign a treaty of peace. You thought that she had used you ill, I am told, but I myself have seen her in sadness because you had forsaken her. Is it true that she left the provinces on your account?"

Lucien smiled; he did not venture to make any other reply.

"Oh! how could you doubt the woman who made such sacrifices for you? Beautiful and intellectual as she is, she deserves besides to be loved for her own sake; and Mme. de Bargeton cared less for you than for your talents. Believe me, women value intellect more than good looks," added the Countess, stealing a glance at Émile Blondet.

In the Minister's hôtel Lucien could see the differences between the great world and that other world beyond the pale in which he had lately been living. There was no sort of resemblance between the two kinds of splendor, no single point in common. The loftiness and disposition of the rooms in one of the handsomest houses in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, the ancient gilding, the breadth of decorative

style, the subdued richness of the accessories, all this was strange and new to him; but Lucien had learned very quickly to take luxury for granted, and he showed no surprise. His behavior was as far removed from assurance or fatuity on the one hand as from complacency and servility upon the other. His manner was good; he found favor in the eyes of all who were not prepared to be hostile, like the younger men, who resented his sudden intrusion into the great world, and felt jealous of his good looks and his success.

When they rose from table, he offered his arm to Mme. d'Espard, and was not refused. Rastignac, watching him, saw that the Marquise was gracious to Lucien, and came in the character of a fellow-countryman to remind the poet that they had met once before at Mme. du Val-Noble's. The young patrician seemed anxious to find an ally in the great man from his own province, asked Lucien to breakfast with him some morning, and offered to introduce him to some young men of fashion. Lucien was nothing loath.

"The dear Blondet is coming," said Rastignac.

The two were standing near the Marquis de Ronquerolles, the Duc de Rhétoré, de Marsay, and General Montriveau. The Minister came across to join the group.

"Well," said he, addressing Lucien with the bluff German heartiness that concealed his dangerous subtlety; "well, so you have made your peace with Mme. d'Espard; she is delighted with you, and we all know," he added, looking round the group, "how difficult it is to please her."

"Yes, but she adores intellect," said Rastignac, "and my illustrious fellow-countryman has wit enough to sell."

"He will soon find out that he is not doing well for himself," Blondet put in briskly. "He will come over; he will soon be one of us."

Those who stood about Lucien rang the changes on this theme; the older and responsible men laid down the law with one or two profound remarks; the younger ones made merry at the expense of the Liberals.

"He simply tossed up head or tails for Right or Left, I am sure," remarked Blondet, "but now he will choose for himself."

Lucien burst out laughing; he thought of his talk with Lousteau that evening in the Luxembourg Gardens.

"He has taken on a bear-leader," continued Blondet, "one Étienne Lousteau, a newspaper hack who sees a five-franc piece in a column. Lousteau's politics consist in a belief that Napoleon will return, and (and this seems to me to be still more simple) in a confidence in the gratitude and patriotism of their worships the gentlemen of the Left. As a Rubempré, Lucien's sympathies should lean towards the aristocracy; as a journalist, he ought to be for authority, or he will never be either Rubempré or a secretary-general."

The Minister now asked Lucien to take a hand at whist; but, to the great astonishment of those present, he declared that he did not know the game.

"Come early to me on the day of that breakfast affair," Rastignac whispered, "and I will teach you to play. You are a discredit to the royal city of Angoulême; and, to repeat M. de Talleyrand's saying, you are laying up an unhappy old age for yourself."

Des Lupeaulx was announced. He remembered Lucien, whom he had met at Mme. du Val-Noble's, and bowed with a semblance of friendliness which the poet could not doubt. Des Lupeaulx was in favor, he was a Master of Requests, and did the Ministry secret services; he was, moreover, cunning and ambitious, slipping himself in everywhere; he was everybody's friend, for he never knew whom he might need. He saw plainly that this was a young journalist whose social success would probably equal his success in literature; saw, too, that the poet was ambitious, and overwhelmed him with protestations and expressions of friendship and interest, till Lucien felt as if they were old friends already, and took his promises and speeches for more than their worth. Des Lupeaulx made a point of knowing a man thoroughly well if he wanted to get rid of him or feared him as a rival. So, to all appearance, Lucien was well received. He knew that much of his success was owing to the Duc de Rhétoré, the Minister, Mme. d'Espard, and Mme. de Montcornet, and went to spend a few moments with the two ladies before taking leave, and talked his very best for them.

"What a coxcomb!" said des Lupeaulx, turning to the Marquise when he had gone.

"He will be rotten before he is ripe," de Marsay added, smiling. "You must have private reasons of your own, madame, for turning his head in this way."

When Lucien stepped into the carriage in the courtyard, he found Coralie waiting for him. She had come to fetch him. The little attention touched him; he told her the history of his evening; and, to his no small astonishment, the new notions which even now were running in his head met with Coralie's approval. She strongly advised him to enlist under the ministerial banner.

"You have nothing to expect from the Liberals but hard knocks," she said. "They plot and conspire; they murdered the Duc de Berri. Will they upset the Government? Never! You will never come to anything through them, while you will be the Comte de Rubempré if you throw in your lot with the other side. You might render services to the State, and be a peer of France, and marry an heiress. Be an Ultra. It is the proper thing besides," she added, this being the last word with her on all subjects. "I dined with the Val-Noble; she told me that Théodore Gaillard is really going to start his little Royalist review, so as to reply to your witticisms and the jokes in the *Miroir*. To hear them talk, M. Villèle's party will be in office before the year is out. Try to turn the change to account before they come to power; and say nothing to Étienne and your friends, for they are quite equal to playing you some ill turn."

A week later, Lucien went to Mme. de Montcornet's house, and saw the woman whom he had so loved, whom later he had stabbed to the heart with a jest. He felt the most violent agitation at the sight of her, for Louise also had undergone a transformation. She was the Louise that she would always have been but for her detention in the provinces—she was a great lady. There was a grace and refinement in her mourning dress which told that she was a happy widow; Lucien fancied that this coquetry was aimed in some

degree at him, and he was right; but, like an ogre, he had tasted flesh, and all that evening he vacillated between Coralie's warm, voluptuous beauty and the dried-up, haughty, cruel Louise. He could not make up his mind to sacrifice the actress to the great lady; and Mme. de Bargeton—all the old feeling reviving in her at the sight of Lucien, Lucien's beauty, Lucien's cleverness—was waiting and expecting that sacrifice all evening; and after all her insinuating speeches and her fascinations, she had her trouble for her pains. She left the room with a fixed determination to be revenged.

"Well, dear Lucien," she had said, and in her kindness there was both generosity and Parisian grace; "well, dear Lucien, so you, that were to have been my pride, took me for your first victim; and I forgave you, my dear, for I felt that in such a revenge there was a trace of love still left."

With that speech, and the queenly way in which it was uttered, Mme. de Bargeton recovered her position. Lucien, convinced that he was a thousand times in the right, felt that he had been put in the wrong. Not one word of the causes of the rupture! not one syllable of the terrible farewell letter! A woman of the world has a wonderful genius for diminishing her faults by laughing at them; she can obliterate them all with a smile or a question of feigned surprise, and she knows this. She remembers nothing, she can explain everything; she is amazed, asks questions, comments, amplifies, and quarrels with you, till in the end her sins disappear like stains on the application of a little soap and water; black as ink you knew them to be; and lo! in a moment, you behold immaculate white innocence, and lucky are you if you do not find that you yourself have sinned in some way beyond redemption.

In a moment old illusions regained their power over Lucien and Louise; they talked like friends, as before; but when the lady, with a hesitating sigh, put the question, "Are you happy?" Lucien was not ready with a prompt, decided answer; he was intoxicated with gratified vanity; Coralie, who (let us admit it) had made life easy for him, had turned his head. A melancholy "No" would have made his fortune,

but he must needs begin to explain his position with regard to Coralie. He said that he was loved for his own sake; he said a good many foolish things that a man will say when he is smitten with a tender passion, and thought the while that he was doing a clever thing.

Mme. de Bargeton bit her lips. There was no more to be said. Mme. d'Espard brought Mme. de Montcornet to her cousin, and Lucien became the hero of the evening, so to speak. He was flattered, petted, and made much of by the three women; he was entangled with art which no words can describe. His social success in this fine and brilliant circle was at least as great as his triumphs in journalism. Beautiful Mlle. des Touches, so well known as "Camille Maupin," asked him to one of her Wednesday dinners; his beauty, now so justly famous, seemed to have made an impression upon her. Lucien exerted himself to show that his wit equaled his good looks, and Mlle. des Touches expressed her admiration with a playful outspokenness and a pretty fervor of friendship which deceive those who do not know life in Paris to its depths, nor suspect how continual enjoyment whets the appetite for novelty.

"If she should like me as much as I like her, we might abridge the romance," said Lucien, addressing de Marsay and Rastignac.

"You both of you write romances too well to care to live them," returned Rastignac. "Can men and women who write ever fall in love with each other? A time is sure to come when they begin to make little cutting remarks."

"It would not be a bad dream for you," laughed de Marsay. "The charming young lady is thirty years old, it is true, but she has an income of eighty thousand livres. She is adorably capricious, and her style of beauty wears well. Coralie is a silly little fool, my dear boy, well enough for a start, for a young spark must have a mistress; but unless you make some great conquest in the great world, an actress will do you harm in the long run. Now, my boy, go and cut out Conti. Here he is, just about to sing with Camille Maupin. Poetry has taken precedence of music ever since time began."



But when Lucien heard Mlle. des Touches's voice blending with Conti's, his hopes fled.

"Conti sings too well," he told des Lupeaulx; and he went back to Mme. de Bargeton, who carried him off to Mme. d'Espard in another room.

"Well, will you not interest yourself in him?" asked Mme. de Bargeton.

The Marquise spoke with an air half kindly, half insolent. "Let M. Chardon first put himself in such a position that he will not compromise those who take an interest in him," she said. "If he wishes to drop his patronymic and to bear his mother's name, he should at any rate be on the right side, should he not?"

"In less than two months I will arrange everything," said Lucien.

"Very well," returned Mme. d'Espard. "I will speak to my father and uncle; they are in waiting, they will speak to the Chancellor for you."

The diplomatist and the two women had very soon discovered Lucien's weak side. The poet's head was turned by the glory of the aristocracy; every man who entered the rooms bore a sounding name mounted in a glittering title, and he himself was plain Chardon. Unspeakable mortification filled him at the sound of it. Wherever he had been during the last few days, that pang had been constantly present with him. He felt, moreover, a sensation quite as unpleasant when he went back to his desk after an evening spent in the great world, in which he made a tolerable figure, thanks to Coralie's carriage and Coralie's servants.

He learned to ride, in order to escort Mme. d'Espard, Mlle. des Touches, and the Comtesse de Montcornet when they drove in the Bois, a privilege which he had envied other young men so greatly when he first came to Paris. Finot was delighted to give his right-hand man an order for the Opéra, so Lucien wasted many an evening there, and thenceforward he was one among the exquisites of the day.

The poet asked Rastignac and his new associates to a breakfast, and made the blunder of giving it in Coralie's rooms in the Rue de Vendôme; he was too young, too much

of a poet, too self-confident, to discern certain shades and distinctions in conduct; and how should an actress, a good-hearted but uneducated girl, teach him life? His guests were anything but charitably disposed towards him; it was clearly proven to their minds that Lucien the critic and the actress were in collusion for their mutual interests, and all of the young men were jealous of an arrangement which all of them stigmatized. The most pitiless of those who laughed that evening at Lucien's expense was Rastignac himself. Rastignac had made and held his position by very similar means; but so careful had he been of appearance, that he could afford to treat scandal as slander.

Lucien proved an apt pupil at whist. Play became a passion with him; and so far from disapproving, Coralie encouraged his extravagance with the peculiar short-sightedness of an all-absorbing love, which sees nothing beyond the moment, and is ready to sacrifice anything, even the future, to the present enjoyment. Coralie looked on cards as a safeguard against rivals. A great love has much in common with childhood—a child's heedless, careless, spendthrift ways, a child's laughter and tears.

In those days there lived and flourished a set of young men, some of them rich, some poor, and all of them idle, called "free-livers" (*viveurs*); and, indeed, they lived with incredible insolence—unabashed and unproductive consumers, and yet more intrepid drinkers. These spendthrifts mingled the roughest practical jokes with a life not so much reckless as suicidal; they drew back from no impossibility, and gloried in pranks which, nevertheless, were confined within certain limits; and as they showed the most original wit in their escapades, it was impossible not to pardon them.

No sign of the times more plainly discovered the helotism to which the Restoration had condemned the young manhood of the epoch. The younger men, being at a loss to know what to do with themselves, were compelled to find other outlets for their superabundant energy besides journalism, or conspiracy, or art, or letters. They squandered their strength in the wildest excesses, such sap and luxuriant power was there in young France. The hard workers among these

gilded youth wanted power and pleasure; the artists wished for money; the idle sought to stimulate their appetites or wished for excitement; one and all of them wanted a place, and one and all were shut out from politics and public life. Nearly all the "free-livers" were men of unusual mental powers; some held out against the enervating life, others were ruined by it. The most celebrated and the cleverest among them was Eugène Rastignac, who entered, with de Marsay's help, upon a political career, in which he has since distinguished himself. The practical jokes, in which the set indulged, became so famous that not a few vaudevilles have been founded upon them.

Blondet introduced Lucien to this society of prodigals, of which he became a brilliant ornament, ranking next to Bixiou, one of the most mischievous and untiring scoffing wits of his time. All through that winter Lucien's life was one long fit of intoxication, with intervals of easy work. He continued his series of sketches of contemporary life, and very occasionally made great efforts to write a few pages of serious criticism, on which he brought his utmost power of thought to bear. But study was the exception, not the rule, and only undertaken at the bidding of necessity; dinners and breakfasts, parties of pleasure and play, took up most of his time, and Coralie absorbed all that was left. He would not think of the morrow. He saw besides that his so-called friends were leading the same life, earning money easily by writing publishers' prospectuses and articles paid for by speculators; all of them lived beyond their incomes, none of them thought seriously of the future.

Lucien had been admitted into the ranks of journalism and of literature on terms of equality; he foresaw immense difficulties in the way if he should try to rise above the rest. Everyone was willing to look upon him as an equal; no one would have him for a superior. Unconsciously he gave up the idea of winning fame in literature, for it seemed easier to gain success in politics.

"Intrigue raises less opposition than talent," du Châtelet had said one day (for Lucien and the Baron had made up their quarrel); "a plot below the surface rouses no one's

attention. Intrigue, moreover, is superior to talent, for it makes something out of nothing; while, for the most part, the immense resources of talent only injure a man."

So Lucien never lost sight of his principal idea; and though to-morrow, following close upon the heels of to-day in the midst of an orgy, never found the promised work accomplished, Lucien was assiduous in society. He paid court to Mme. de Bargeton, the Marquise d'Espard, and the Comtesse de Montcornet; he never missed a single party given by Mlle. des Touches, appearing in society after a dinner given by authors or publishers, and leaving the salons for a supper given in consequence of a bet. The demands of conversation and the excitement of play absorbed all the ideas and energy left by excess. The poet had lost the lucidity of judgment and coolness of head which must be preserved if a man is to see all that is going on around him, and never to lose the exquisite tact which the parvenu needs at every moment. How should he know how many a time Mme. de Bargeton left him with wounded susceptibilities, how often she forgave him or added one more condemnation to the rest?

Châtelet saw that his rival had still a chance left, so he became Lucien's friend. He encouraged the poet in dissipation that wasted his energies. Rastignac, jealous of his fellow-countryman, and thinking, besides, that Châtelet would be a surer and more useful ally than Lucien, had taken up the Baron's cause. So, some few days after the meeting of the Petrarch and Laura of Angoulême, Rastignac brought about a reconciliation between the poet and the elderly beau at a sumptuous supper given at the Rocher de Cancale. Lucien never returned home till morning, and rose in the middle of the day; Coralie was always at his side, he could not forego a single pleasure. Sometimes he saw his real position, and made good resolutions, but they came to nothing in his idle, easy life; and the mainspring of will grew slack, and only responded to the heaviest pressure of necessity.

Coralie had been glad that Lucien should amuse himself; she had encouraged him in this reckless expenditure, because

she thought that the cravings which she fostered would bind her lover to her; he could not lead his present life without her. But tender-hearted and loving as she was, she found courage to advise Lucien not to forget his work, and once or twice was obliged to remind him that he had earned very little during the month. Their debts were growing frightfully fast. The fifteen hundred francs which remained from the purchase-money of the *Marguerites* had been swallowed up at once, together with Lucien's first five hundred livres. In three months he had only made a thousand francs, yet he felt as though he had been working tremendously hard. But by this time Lucien had adopted the "free-liver's" pleasant theory of debts.

Debts are becoming to a young man, but after the age of five-and-twenty they are inexcusable. It should be observed that there are certain natures in which a really poetic temper is united with a weakened will; and these while absorbed in feeling, that they may transmute personal experience, sensation, or impression into some permanent form, are essentially deficient in the moral sense which should accompany all observation. Poets prefer rather to receive their own impressions than to enter into the souls of others to study the mechanism of their feelings and thoughts. So Lucien neither asked his associates what became of those who disappeared from among them, nor looked into the futures of his so-called friends. Some of them were heirs to property, others had definite expectations; yet others either possessed names that were known in the world, or a most robust belief in their destiny and a fixed resolution to circumvent the law. Lucien, too, believed in his future on the strength of various profound axiomatic sayings of Blondet's: "Everything comes out all right at last—If a man has nothing, his affairs cannot be embarrassed—We have nothing to lose but the fortune that we seek—Swim with the stream; it will take you somewhere—A clever man with a footing in society can make a fortune whenever he pleases."

That winter, filled as it was with so many pleasures and dissipations, was a necessary interval employed in finding capital for the new Royalist paper; Théodore Gaillard and

Hector Merlin only brought out the first number of the *Réveil* in March 1822. The affair had been settled at Mme. du Val-Noble's house. Mme. du Val-Noble exercised a certain influence over the great personages, Royalist writers, and bankers who met in her splendid rooms—"fit for a tale out of the *Arabian Nights*," as the elegant and clever courtesan herself used to say—to transact business which could not well be arranged elsewhere. The editorship had been promised to Hector Merlin. Lucien, Merlin's intimate, was pretty certain to be his right-hand man, and a *feuilleton* in a Ministerial paper had been promised to him besides. All through the dissipations of that winter Lucien had been secretly making ready for this change of front. Child as he was, he fancied that he was a deep politician because he concealed the preparation for the approaching transformation scene, while he was counting upon Ministerial largesses to extricate himself from embarrassment and to lighten Coralie's secret cares. Coralie said nothing of her distress; she smiled now, as always; but Bérénice was bolder, she kept Lucien informed of their difficulties; and the budding great man, moved, after the fashion of poets, by the tale of disasters, would vow that he would begin to work in earnest, and then forget his resolution, and drown his fleeting cares in excess. One day Coralie saw the poetic brow overcast, and scolded Bérénice, and told her lover that everything would be settled.

Mme. d'Espard and Mme. de Bargeton were waiting for Lucien's profession of his new creed, so they said, before applying through Châtelet for the patent which should permit Lucien to bear the so-much desired name. Lucien had proposed to dedicate the *Marguerites* to Mme. d'Espard, and the Marquise seemed to be not a little flattered by a compliment which authors have been somewhat chary of paying since they became a power in the land; but when Lucien went to Dauriat and asked after his book, that worthy publisher met him with excellent reasons for the delay in its appearance. Dauriat had this and that in hand, which took up all his time; a new volume by Canalis was coming out, and he did not want the two books to clash; M. de Lamartine's

second series of *Meditations* was in the press, and two important collections of poetry ought not to appear together.

By this time, however, Lucien's needs were so pressing that he had recourse to Finot, and received an advance on his work. When, at a supper party that evening, the poet journalist explained his position to his friends in the fast set, they drowned his scruples in champagne, iced with pleasures. Debts! There was never yet a man of any power without debts! Debts represented satisfied cravings, clamorous vices. A man only succeeds under the pressure of the iron hand of necessity. Debts forsooth!

"Why, the one pledge of which a great man can be sure, is given him by his friend the pawnbroker," cried Blondet.

"If you want everything, you must owe for everything," called Bixiou.

"No," corrected des Lupeaulx, "if you owe for everything, you have had everything."

The party contrived to convince the novice that his debts were a golden spur to urge on the horses of the chariot of his fortunes. There is always the stock example of Julius Cæsar with his debt of forty millions, and Friedrich II. on an allowance of one ducat a month, and a host of other great men whose failings are held up for the corruption of youth, while not a word is said of their wide-reaching ideas, their courage equal to all odds.

Creditors seized Coralie's horses, carriage, and furniture at last, for an amount of four thousand francs. Lucien went to Lousteau and asked his friend to meet his bill for the thousand francs lent to pay gaming debts; but Lousteau showed him certain pieces of stamped paper, which proved that Florine was in much the same case. Lousteau was grateful, however, and offered to take the necessary steps for the sale of Lucien's *Archer of Charles IX.*

"How came Florine to be in this plight?" asked Lucien.

"That Matifat took alarm," said Lousteau. "We have lost him; but if Florine chooses, she can make him pay dear for his treachery. I will tell you all about it."

Three days after this bootless errand, Lucien and Coralie

were breakfasting in melancholy spirits beside the fire in their pretty bedroom. Bérénice had cooked a dish of eggs for them over the grate; for the cook had gone, and the coachman and servants had taken leave. They could not sell the furniture, for it had been attached; there was not a single object of any value in the house; a goodly collection of pawntickets, forming a very instructive octavo volume, represented all the gold, silver, and jewelry. Bérénice had kept back a couple of spoons and forks, that was all.

Lousteau's newspaper was of service now to Coralie and Lucien, little as they suspected it; for the tailor, dressmaker, and milliner were afraid to meddle with a journalist who was quite capable of writing down their establishments.

Étienne Lousteau broke in upon their breakfast with a shout of "Hurrah! Long live *The Archer of Charles IX.*! And I have converted a hundred francs' worth of books into cash, children. We will go halves."

He handed fifty francs to Coralie, and sent Bérénice out in quest of a more substantial breakfast.

"Hector Merlin and I went to a booksellers' trade dinner yesterday, and prepared the way for your romance with cunning insinuations. Dauriat is in treaty, but Dauriat is haggling over it; he won't give more than four thousand francs for two thousand copies, and you want six thousand francs. We made you out twice as great as Sir Walter Scott! Oh! you have such novels as never were in the inwards of you. It is not a mere book sale, it is a big business; you are not simply the writer of one more or less ingenious novel, you are going to write a whole series. That word 'series' did it! So, mind you, don't forget that you have a great historical series on hand—*La Grande Mademoiselle*, or *The France of Louis Quatorze*; *Cotillon I.*, or *The Early Days of Louis Quinze*; *The Queen and the Cardinal*, or *Paris and the Fronde*; *The Son of the Concini*, or *Richelieu's Intrigue*. These novels will be announced on the wrapper of the book. We call this maneuver 'giving a success a toss in the coverlet,' for the titles are all to appear on the cover, till you will be better known for the books that you have not written than for the work you have done. And



'In the Press' is a way of gaining credit in advance for work that you will do. Come now, let us have a little fun! Here comes the champagne. You can understand, Lucien, that our men opened eyes as big as saucers. By the by, I see that you have saucers still left."

"They are attached," explained Coralie.

"I understand, and I resume. Show a publisher one manuscript volume and he will believe in all the rest. A publisher asks to see your manuscript, and gives you to understand that he is going to read it. Why disturb his harmless vanity? They never read a manuscript; they would not publish so many if they did. Well, Hector and I allowed it to leak out that you might consider an offer of five thousand francs for three thousand copies, in two editions. Let me have your *Archer*; the day after to-morrow we are to breakfast with the publishers, and we will get the upper hand of them."

"Who are they?" asked Lucien.

"Two partners named Fendant and Cavalier; they are two good fellows, pretty straightforward in business. One of them used to be with Vidal and Porchon, the other is the cleverest hand on the Quai des Augustins. They only started in business last year, and have lost a little on translations of English novels; so now my gentlemen have a mind to exploit the native product. There is a rumor current that these dealers in spoiled white paper are trading on other people's capital; but I don't think it matters very much to you who finds the money, so long as you are paid."

Two days later, the pair went to a breakfast in the Rue Serpente, in Lucien's old quarter of Paris. Lousteau still kept his room in the Rue de la Harpe; and it was in the same state as before, but this time Lucien felt no surprise; he had been initiated into the life of journalism; he knew all its ups and downs. Since that evening of his introduction to the Wooden Galleries, he had been paid for many an article, and gambled away the money along with the desire to write. He had filled columns, not once but many times, in the ingenious ways described by Lousteau on that memorable evening as they went to the Palais Royal. He was

dependent upon Barbet and Braulard; he trafficked in books and theater tickets; he shrank no longer from any attack, from writing any panegyric; and at this moment he was in some sort rejoicing to make all that he could out of Lousteau before turning his back on the Liberals. His intimate knowledge of the party would stand him in good stead in future. And Lousteau, on his side, was privately receiving five hundred francs of the purchase-money, under the name of commission, from Fendant and Cavalier for introducing the future Sir Walter Scott to two enterprising tradesmen in search of a French Author of "Waverley."

The firm of Fendant and Cavalier had started in business without any capital whatsoever. A great many publishing houses were established at that time in the same way, and are likely to be established so long as papermakers and printers will give credit for the time required to play some seven or eight of the games of chance called "new publications." At that time, as at present, the author's copyright was paid for in bills at six, nine, and twelve months—a method of payment determined by the custom of the trade, for booksellers settle accounts between themselves by bills at even longer dates. Papermakers and printers are paid in the same way, so that in practice the publisher-bookseller has a dozen or a score of works on sale for a twelvemonth before he pays for them. Even if only two or three of these hit the public taste, the profitable speculations pay for the bad, and the publisher pays his way by grafting, as it were, one book upon another. But if all of them turn out badly; or if, for his misfortune, the publisher-bookseller happens to bring out some really good literature which stays on hand until the right public discovers and appreciates it; or if it costs too much to discount the paper that he receives, then, resignedly, he files his schedule, and becomes a bankrupt with an untroubled mind. He was prepared all along for something of the kind. So, all the chances being in favor of the publishers, they staked other people's money, not their own, upon the gaming-table of business speculation.

This was the case with Fendant and Cavalier. Cavalier brought his experience, Fendant his industry; the capital

was a joint-stock affair, and very accurately described by that word, for it consisted in a few thousand francs scraped together with difficulty by the mistresses of the pair. Out of this fund they allowed each other a fairly handsome salary, and scrupulously spent it all in dinners to journalists and authors, or at the theater, where their business was transacted, as they said. This questionably honest couple were both supposed to be clever men of business, but Fendant was more slippery than Cavalier. Cavalier, true to his name, traveled about, Fendant looked after business in Paris. A partnership between two publishers is always more or less of a duel, and so it was with Fendant and Cavalier.

They had brought out plenty of romances already, such as the *Tour du Nord*, *Le Marchand de Benares*, *La Fontaine du Sépulcre*, and *Tékéli*, translations of the works of Galt, an English novelist who never attained much popularity in France. The success of translations of Scott had called the attention of the trade to English novels. The race of publishers, all agog for a second Norman Conquest, were seeking industriously for a second Scott, just as at a rather later day everyone must needs look for asphalt in stony soil, or bitumen in marshes, and speculate in projected railways. The stupidity of the Paris commercial world is conspicuous in these attempts to do the same thing twice, for success lies in contraries; and in Paris, of all places in the world, success spoils success. So beneath the title of *Strelitz, or Russia a Hundred Years Ago*, Fendant and Cavalier rashly added in big letters the words, "In the style of Scott."

Fendant and Cavalier were in great need of a success. A single good book might float their sunken bales, they thought; and there was the alluring prospect besides of articles in the newspapers, the great way of promoting sales in those days. A book is very seldom bought and sold for its just value, and purchases are determined by considerations quite other than the merits of the work. So Fendant and Cavalier thought of Lucien as a journalist, and of his book as a saleable article, which would help them to tide over their monthly settlement.

The partners occupied the ground floor of one of the great

old-fashioned houses in the Rue Serpente; their private office had been contrived at the further end of a suite of large drawing-rooms, now converted into warehouses for books. Lucien and Étienne found the publishers in their office, the agreement drawn up, and the bills ready. Lucien wondered at such prompt action.

Fendant was short and thin, and by no means reassuring of aspect. With his low, narrow forehead, sunken nose, and hard mouth, he looked like a Kalmuck Tartar; a pair of small, wide-awake black eyes, the crabbed irregular outline of his countenance, a voice like a cracked bell—the man's whole appearance, in fact, combined to give the impression that this was a consummate rascal. A honeyed tongue compensated for these disadvantages, and he gained his ends by talk. Cavalier, a stout, thick-set young fellow, looked more like the driver of a mail coach than a publisher; he had hair of a sandy color, a fiery red countenance, and the heavy build and untiring tongue of a commercial traveler.

"There is no need to discuss this affair," said Fendant, addressing Lucien and Lousteau. "I have read the work, it is very literary, and so exactly the kind of thing we want, that I have sent it off as it is to the printer. The agreement is drawn on the lines laid down, and besides, we always make the same stipulations in all cases. The bills fall due in six, nine, and twelve months respectively; you will meet with no difficulty in discounting them, and we will refund you the discount. We have reserved the right of giving a new title to the book. We don't care for *The Archer of Charles IX.*; it doesn't tickle the reader's curiosity sufficiently; there were several kings of that name, you see, and there were so many archers in the Middle Ages. If you had only called it the *Soldier of Napoleon*, now! But *The Archer of Charles IX.*!—why, Cavalier would have to give a course of history lessons before he could place a copy anywhere in the provinces."

"If you but knew the class of people that we have to do with!" exclaimed Cavalier.

"*Saint Bartholomew* would suit better," continued Fendant.

"*Catherine de' Medici, or France under Charles IX.*, would sound more like one of Scott's novels," added Cavalier.

"We will settle it when the work is printed," said Fendant.

"Do as you please, so long as I approve your title," said Lucien.

The agreement was read over, signed in duplicate, and each of the contracting parties took his copy. Lucien put the bills in his pocket with unequaled satisfaction, and the four repaired to Fendant's abode, where they breakfasted on beefsteaks and oysters, kidneys in champagne, and Brie cheese; but if the fare was something of the homeliest, the wines were exquisite; Cavalier had an acquaintance, a traveler in the wine trade. Just as they sat down to table the printer appeared, to Lucien's surprise, with the first two proof-sheets.

"We want to get on with it," Fendant said; "we are counting on your book; we want a success confoundedly badly."

The breakfast, begun at noon, lasted till five o'clock.

"Where shall we get cash for these things?" asked Lucien as they came away, somewhat heated and flushed with the wine.

"We might try Barbet," suggested Étienne, and they turned down to the Quai des Augustins.

"Coralie is astonished to the highest degree over Florine's loss. Florine only told her about it yesterday; she seemed to lay the blame of it on you, and was so vexed, that she was ready to throw you over."

"That's true," said Lousteau. Wine had got the better of prudence, and he unbosomed himself to Lucien, ending up with: "My friend—for you are my friend, Lucien; you lent me a thousand francs, and you have only once asked me for the money—shun play! If I had never touched a card, I should be a happy man. I owe money all round. At this moment I have the bailiffs at my heels; indeed, when I go to the Palais Royal, I have dangerous capes to double."

In the language of the fast set, doubling a cape meant dodging a creditor, or keeping out of his way. Lucien

had not heard the expression before, but he was familiar with the practice by this time.

"Are your debts so heavy?"

"A mere trifle," said Lousteau. "A thousand crowns would pull me through. I have resolved to turn steady and give up play, and I have done a little 'chantage' to pay my debts."

"What is 'chantage'?" asked Lucien.

"It is an English invention recently imported. A 'chanteur' is a man who can manage to put a paragraph in the papers—never an editor nor a responsible man, for they are not supposed to know anything about it, and there is always a Giroudeau or a Philippe Bridau to be found. A bravo of this stamp finds up somebody who has his own reasons for not wanting to be talked about. Plenty of people have a few peccadilloes, or some more or less original sin, upon their consciences; there are plenty of fortunes made in ways that would not bear looking into; sometimes a man has kept the letter of the law, and sometimes he has not; and in either case, there is a titbit of tattle for the inquirer, as, for instance, that tale of Fouché's police surrounding the spies of the Prefect of Police, who, not being in the secret of the fabrication of forged English bank-notes, were just about to pounce on the clandestine printers employed by the Minister, or there is the story of Prince Galathionne's diamonds, the Maubreuil affair, or the Pom-breton will case. The 'chanteur' gets possession of some compromising letter, asks for an interview; and if the man that made the money does not buy silence, the 'chanteur' draws a picture of the press ready to take the matter up and unravel his private affairs. The rich man is frightened, he comes down with the money, and the trick succeeds.

"You are committed to some risky venture, which might easily be written down in a series of articles; a 'chanteur' waits upon you, and offers to withdraw the articles—for a consideration. 'Chanteurs' are sent to men in office, who will bargain that their acts and not their private characters are to be attacked, or they are heedless of their characters, and anxious only to shield the woman they love. One of

your acquaintances, that charming Master of Requests des Lupeaulx, is a kind of agent for affairs of this sort. The rascal has made a position for himself in the most marvelous way in the very center of power; he is the middleman of the press and the ambassador of the Ministers; he works upon a man's self-love; he bribes newspapers to pass over a loan in silence, or to make no comment on a contract which was never put up for public tender, and the jackals of Liberal bankers get a share out of it. That was a bit of 'chantage' that you did with Dauriat; he gave you a thousand crowns to let Nathan alone. In the eighteenth century, when journalism was still in its infancy, this kind of blackmail was levied by pamphleteers in the pay of favorites and great lords. The original inventor was Pietro Aretino, a great Italian. Kings went in fear of him, as stage-players go in fear of a newspaper to-day."

"What did you do to the Matifat to make the thousand crowns?"

"I attacked Florine in half a dozen papers. Florine complained to Matifat. Matifat went to Braulard to find out what the attacks meant. I did my 'chantage' for Finot's benefit, and Finot put Braulard on the wrong scent; Braulard told the man of drugs that *you* were demolishing Florine in Coralie's interest. Then Giroudeau went round to Matifat and told him (in confidence) that the whole business could be accommodated if he (Matifat) would consent to sell his sixth share of Finot's review for ten thousand francs. Finot was to give me a thousand crowns if the dodge succeeded. Well, Matifat was only too glad to get back ten thousand francs out of the thirty thousand invested in a risky speculation, as he thought, for Florine had been telling him for several days past that Finot's review was doing badly; and, instead of paying a dividend, something was said of calling up more capital. So Matifat was just about to close with the offer, when the manager of the Panorama-Dramatique comes to him with some accommodation bills that he wanted to negotiate before filing his schedule. To induce Matifat to take them of him, he let out a word of Finot's trick. Matifat, being a shrewd man of business, took the hint,

held tight to his sixth, and is laughing in his sleeve at us. Finot and I are howling with despair. We have been so misguided as to attack a man who has no affection for his mistress, a heartless, soulless wretch. Unluckily, too, for us, Matifat's business is not amenable to the jurisdiction of the press, and he cannot be made to smart for it through his interests. A druggist is not like a hatter or a milliner, or a theater or a work of art; he is above criticism; you can't run down his opium and dyewoods, nor cocoa beans, paint, and pepper. Florine is at her wits' end; the Panorama closes to-morrow, and what will become of her she does not know."

"Coralie's engagement at the Gymnase begins in a few days," said Lucien; "she might do something for Florine."

"Not she!" said Lousteau. "Coralie is not clever, but she is not quite simple enough to help herself to a rival. We are in a mess with a vengeance. And Finot is in such a hurry to buy back his sixth——"

"Why?"

"It is a capital bit of business, my dear fellow. There is a chance of selling the paper for three hundred thousand francs; Finot would have one-third, and his partners besides are going to pay him a commission, which he will share with des Lupeaulx. So I propose to do another turn of 'chantage.'"

"'Chantage' seems to mean your money or your life?"

"It is better than that," said Lousteau; "it is your money or your character. A short time ago the proprietor of a minor newspaper was refused credit. The day before yesterday it was announced in his columns that a good repeater set with diamonds belonging to a certain notability had found its way in a curious fashion into the hands of a private soldier in the Guards; the story promised to the readers might have come from the *Arabian Nights*. The notability lost no time in asking that editor to dine with him; the editor was distinctly a gainer by the transaction, and contemporary history has lost an anecdote. Whenever the press makes vehement onslaughts upon someone in power, you may be sure that there is some refusal to do a service



behind it. Blackmailing with regard to private life is the terror of the richest Englishman, and a great source of wealth to the press in England, which is infinitely more corrupt than ours. We are children in comparison! In England they will pay five or six thousand francs for a compromising letter to sell again."

"Then how can you lay hold of Matifat?" asked Lucien.

"My dear boy, that low tradesman wrote the queerest letters to Florine; the spelling, style, and matter of them are ludicrous to the last degree. We can strike him in the very midst of his Lares and Penates, where he feels himself safest, without so much as mentioning his name; and he cannot complain, for he lives in fear and terror of his wife. Imagine his wrath when he sees the first number of a little serial entitled the *Amours of a Druggist*, and is given fair warning that his love-letters have fallen into the hands of certain journalists. He talks about the 'little god Cupid,' he tells Florine that she enables him to cross the desert of life (which looks as if he took her for a camel), and spells 'never' with two v's. There is enough in that immensely funny correspondence to bring an influx of subscribers for a fortnight. He will shake in his shoes lest an anonymous letter should supply his wife with a key to the riddle. The question is whether Florine will consent to appear to prosecute Matifat. She has some principles, which is to say, some hopes, still left. Perhaps she means to keep the letters and to make something for herself out of them. She is cunning, as befits my pupil. But as soon as she finds out that a bailiff is no laughing matter, or Finot gives her a suitable present or hopes of an engagement, she will give me the letters, and I will sell them to Finot. Finot will put the correspondence in his uncle's hands, and Giroudeau will bring Matifat to terms."

These confidences sobered Lucien. His first thought was that he had some extremely dangerous friends; his second, that it would be impolitic to break with them; for if Mme. d'Espard, Mme. de Bargeton, and Châtelet should fail to keep their word with him, he might need their terrible power yet. By this time Étienne and Lucien had reached Barbet's

miserable bookshop on the Quai. Étienne addressed Barbet—

“We have five thousand francs’ worth of bills at six, nine, and twelve months, given by Fendant and Cavalier. Are you willing to discount them for us?”

“I will give you three thousand francs for them,” said Barbet with imperturbable coolness.

“Three thousand francs!” echoed Lucien.

“Nobody else will give you as much,” rejoined the bookseller. “The firm will go bankrupt before three months are out; but I happen to know that they have some good books that are hanging on hand; they cannot afford to wait, so I shall buy their stock for cash and pay them with their own bills, and get the books at a reduction of two thousand francs. That’s how it is.”

“Do you mind losing a couple of thousand francs, Lucien?” asked Lousteau.

“Yes!” Lucien answered vehemently. He was dismayed by this first rebuff.

“You are making a mistake,” said Étienne.

“You won’t find anyone that will take their paper,” said Barbet. “Your book is their last stake, sir. The printer will not trust them; they are obliged to leave the copies in pawn with him. If they make a hit now, it will only stave off bankruptcy for another six months, sooner or later they will have to go. They are cleverer at tippling than at bookselling. In my own case, their bills mean business; and that being so, I can afford to give more than a professional discount who simply looks at the signatures. It is a bill-discounter’s business to know whether three names on a bill are each good for thirty per cent. in case of bankruptcy. And here at the outset you only offer two signatures, and neither of them worth ten per cent.”

The two journalists exchanged glances in surprise. Here was a little scrub of a bookseller putting the essence of the art and mystery of bill-discounting in these few words.

“That will do, Barbet,” said Lousteau. “Can you tell us of a bill-broker that will look at us?”

“There is Daddy Chaboisseau, on the Quai Saint-Michel,

you know. He tided Fendant over his last monthly settlement. If you won't listen to my offer, you might go and see what he says to you; but you would only come back to me, and then I shall offer you two thousand francs instead of three."

Étienne and Lucien betook themselves to the Quai Saint-Michel, and found Chaboisseau in a little house with a passage entry. Chaboisseau, a bill-discounter, whose dealings were principally with the book-trade, lived in a second-floor lodging furnished in the most eccentric manner. A brevet-rank banker and millionaire to boot, he had a taste for the classical style. The cornice was in the classical style; the bedstead, in the purest classical taste, dated from the time of the Empire, when such things were in fashion; the purple hangings fell over the wall like the classic draperies in the background of one of David's pictures. Chairs and tables, lamps and sconces, and every least detail had evidently been sought with patient care in furniture warehouses. There was the elegance of antiquity about the classic revival as well as its fragile and somewhat arid grace. The man himself, like his manner of life, was in grotesque contrast with the airy mythological look of his rooms; and it may be remarked that the most eccentric characters are found among men who give their whole energies to money-making.

Men of this stamp are, in a certain sense, intellectual libertines. Everything is within their reach, consequently their fancy is jaded, and they will make immense efforts to shake off their indifference. The student of human nature can always discover some hobby, some accessible weakness and sensitive spot in their hearts. Chaboisseau might have intrenched himself in antiquity as in an impregnable camp.

"The man will be an antique to match, no doubt," said Étienne, smiling.

Chaboisseau, a little old person with powdered hair, wore a greenish coat and snuff-brown waistcoat; he was tricked out besides in black small-clothes, ribbed stockings and shoes that creaked as he came forward to take the bills. After a short scrutiny, he returned them to Lucien with a serious countenance.

"MM. Fendant and Cavalier are delightful young fellows; they have plenty of intelligence; but, I have no money," he said blandly.

"My friend here would be willing to meet you in the matter of discount——" Étienne began.

"I would not take the bills on any consideration," returned the little broker. The words slid down upon Lousteau's suggestion like the blade of the guillotine on a man's neck.

The two friends withdrew; but as Chaboisseau went prudently out with them across the ante-chamber, Lucien noticed a pile of second-hand books. Chaboisseau had been in the trade, and this was a recent purchase. Shining conspicuous among them, he noticed a copy of a work by the architect Ducerceau, which gives exceedingly accurate plans of various royal palaces and châteaux in France.

"Could you let me have that book?" he asked.

"Yes," said Chaboisseau, transformed into a bookseller.

"How much?"

"Fifty francs."

"It is dear, but I want it. And I can only pay you with one of the bills which you refuse to take."

"You have a bill there for five hundred francs at six months; I will take that one of you," said Chaboisseau.

Apparently at the last statement of accounts, there had been a balance of five hundred francs in favor of Fendant and Cavalier.

They went back to the classical apartment. Chaboisseau made out a little memorandum, interest so much and commission so much, total deduction thirty francs, then he subtracted fifty francs for Ducerceau's book; finally, from a cash box full of coin, he took four hundred and twenty francs.

"Look here, though, M. Chaboisseau, the bills are either all of them good, or all bad alike; why don't you take the rest?"

"This is not discounting; I am paying myself for a sale," said the old man.

Étienne and Lucien were still laughing at Chaboisseau, without understanding him, when they reached Dauriat's

shop, and Étienne asked Gabusson to give them the name of a bill-broker. Gabusson thus appealed to gave them a letter of introduction to a broker in the Boulevard Poissonnière, telling them at the same time that this was the "oddest and queerest party" (to use his own expression) that he, Gabusson, had come across. The friends took a cab by the hour, and went to the address.

"If Samanon won't take your bills," Gabusson had said, "nobody else will look at them."

A second-hand bookseller on the ground floor, a second-hand clothes dealer on the first story, and a seller of indecent prints on the second, Samanon carried on a fourth business—he was a money-lender into the bargain. No character in Hoffmann's romances, no sinister-brooding miser of Scott's, can compare with this freak of human and Parisian nature (always admitting that Samanon was human). In spite of himself, Lucien shuddered at the sight of the dried-up little old creature, whose bones seemed to be cutting a leather skin, spotted with all sorts of little green and yellow patches, like a portrait by Titian or Veronese when you look at it closely. One of Samanon's eyes was fixed and glassy, the other lively and bright; he seemed to keep that dead eye for the bill-discounting part of his profession, and the other for the trade in the pornographic curiosities upstairs. A few stray white hairs escaping from under a small, sleek, rusty black wig, stood erect above a sallow forehead with a suggestion of menace about it; a hollow trench in either cheek defined the outline of the jaws; while a set of projecting teeth, still white, seemed to stretch the skin of the lips with the effect of an equine yawn. The contrast between the ill-assorted eyes and grinning mouth gave Samanon a passably ferocious air; and the very bristles on the man's chin looked stiff and sharp as pins.

Nor was there the slightest sign about him of any desire to redeem a sinister appearance by attention to the toilet; his threadbare jacket was all but dropping to pieces; a cravat, which had once been black, was frayed by contact with a stubble chin, and left on exhibition a throat as wrinkled as a turkey-gobbler's.

This was the individual whom Étienne and Lucien discovered in his filthy counting-house, busily affixing tickets to the backs of a parcel of books from a recent sale. In a glance, the friends exchanged the innumerable questions raised by the existence of such a creature; then they presented Gabusson's introduction and Fendant and Cavalier's bills. Samanon was still reading the note when a third comer entered, the wearer of a short jacket, which seemed in the dimly-lighted shop to be cut out of a piece of zinc roofing, so solid was it by reason of alloy with all kinds of foreign matter. Oddly attired as he was, the man was an artist of no small intellectual power, and ten years later he was destined to assist in the inauguration of the great but ill-founded Saint-Simonian system.

"I want my coat, my black trousers, and satin waist-coat," said this person, pressing a numbered ticket on Samanon's attention. Samanon touched the brass button of a bell-pull, and a woman came down from some upper region, a Normande apparently, to judge by her rich, fresh complexion.

"Let the gentleman have his clothes," said Samanon, holding out a hand to the newcomer. "It's a pleasure to do business with you, sir; but that youngster whom one of your friends introduced to me took me in most abominably."

"Took *him* in!" chuckled the newcomer, pointing out Samanon to the two journalists with an extremely comical gesture. The great man dropped thirty sous into the money-lender's yellow, wrinkled hand; like the Neapolitan *lazzaroni*, he was taking his best clothes out of pawn for a state occasion. The coins dropped jingling into the till.

"What queer business are you up to?" asked Lousteau of the artist, an opium-eater who dwelt among visions of enchanted palaces till he either could not or would not create.

"*He* lends you a good deal more than an ordinary pawn-broker on anything you pledge; and besides, he is so awfully charitable, he allows you to take your clothes out when you must have something to wear. I am going to dine with the Kellers and my mistress to-night," he continued; "and to me it is easier to find thirty sous than two hundred

francs, so I keep my wardrobe here. It has brought the charitable usurer a hundred francs in the last six months. Samanon has devoured my library already, volume by volume" (*livre à livre*).

"And sou by sou," Lousteau said with a laugh.

"I will let you have fifteen hundred francs," said Samanon, looking up.

Lucien started, as if the bill-broker had thrust a red-hot skewer through his heart. Samanon was subjecting the bills and their dates to a close scrutiny.

"And even then," he added, "I must see Fendant first. He ought to deposit some books with me. You aren't worth much" (turning to Lucien); "you are living with Coralie, and your furniture has been attached."

Lousteau, watching Lucien, saw him take up his bills, and dash out into the street. "He is the Devil himself!" exclaimed the poet. For several seconds he stood outside gazing at the shop front. The whole place was so pitiful, that a passer-by could not see it without smiling at the sight, and wondering what kind of business a man could do among those mean, dirty shelves of ticketed books.

A few moments later, the great man, in incognito, came out, very well dressed, smiled at the friends, and turned to go with them in the direction of the Passage des Panoramas, where he meant to complete his toilet by the polishing of his boots.

"If you see Samanon in a bookseller's shop, or calling on a paper-merchant or a printer, you may know that it is all over with that man," said the artist. "Samanon is the undertaker come to take the measurements for a coffin."

"You won't discount your bills now, Lucien," said Étienne.

"If Samanon will not take them, nobody else will; he is the *ultima ratio*," said the stranger. "He is one of Gigonet's lambs, a spy for Palma, Werbrust, Gobseck, and the rest of those crocodiles who swim in the Paris money market. Every man with a fortune to make, or unmake, is sure to come across one of them sooner or later."

"If you cannot discount your bills at fifty per cent.,"

remarked Lousteau, "you must exchange them for hard cash."

"How?"

"Give them to Coralie; Camusot will cash them for her. —You are disgusted," added Lousteau, as Lucien cut him short with a start. "What nonsense! How can you allow such a silly scruple to turn the scale, when your future is in the balance?"

"I shall take this money to Coralie in any case," began Lucien.

"Here is more folly!" cried Lousteau. "You will not keep your creditors quiet with four hundred francs when you must have four thousand. Let us keep a little and get drunk on it, if we lose the rest at *rouge et noir*."

"That is sound advice," said the great man.

Those words, spoken not four paces from Frascati's, were magnetic in their effect. The friends dismissed their cab and went up to the gaming-table.

At the outset they won three thousand francs, then they lost and fell to five hundred; again they won three thousand seven hundred francs, and again they lost all but a five-franc piece. After another turn of luck they staked two thousand francs on an even number to double the stake at a stroke; an even number had not turned up for five times in succession, and this was the sixth time. They punted the whole sum, and an odd number turned up once more.

After two hours of all-absorbing, frenzied excitement, the two dashed down the staircase with the hundred francs kept back for the dinner. Upon the steps, between the two pillars which support the little sheet-iron veranda to which so many eyes have been upturned in longing or despair, Lousteau stopped and looked into Lucien's flushed, excited face.

"Let us just try fifty francs," he said.

And up the stairs again they went. An hour later they owned a thousand crowns. Black had turned up for the fifth consecutive time; they trusted that their previous luck would not repeat itself, and put the whole sum on the red—black turned up for the sixth time. They had lost. It was now six o'clock.



"Let us just try twenty-five francs," said Lucien.

The new venture was soon made—and lost. The twenty-five francs went in five stakes. Then Lucien, in a frenzy, flung down his last twenty-five francs on the number of his age, and won. No words can describe how his hands trembled as he raked in the coins which the bank paid him one by one. He handed ten louis to Lousteau.

"Fly!" he cried; "take it to Véry's."

Lousteau took the hint and went to order dinner. Lucien, left alone, laid his thirty louis on the red and won. Emboldened by the inner voice which a gambler always hears, he staked the whole again on the red, and again he won. He felt as if there were a furnace within him. Without heeding the voice, he laid a hundred and twenty louis on the black and lost. Then to the torturing excitement of suspense succeeded the delicious feeling of relief known to the gambler who has nothing left to lose, and must perforce leave the palace of fire in which his dreams melt and vanish.

He found Lousteau at Véry's, and flung himself upon the cookery (to make use of *la Fontaine's* expression), and drowned his cares in wine. By nine o'clock his ideas were so confused that he could not imagine why the portress in the Rue de Vendôme persisted in sending him to the Rue de la Lune.

"Mlle. Coralie has gone," said the woman. "She has taken lodgings elsewhere. She left her address with me on this scrap of paper."

Lucien was too far gone to be surprised at anything. He went back to the cab which had brought him, and was driven to the Rue de la Lune, making puns to himself on the name of the street as he went.

The news of the failure of the Panorama-Dramatique had come like a thunder-clap. Coralie, taking alarm, made haste to sell her furniture (with the consent of her creditors) to little, old Cardot, who installed Florentine in the rooms at once. The tradition of the house remained unbroken. Coralie paid her creditors and satisfied the landlord, proceeding with her "washing-day," as she called it, while Bérénice bought the absolutely indispensable necessities to fur-

nish a fourth-floor lodging in the Rue de la Lune, a few doors from the Gymnase. Here Coralie was waiting for Lucien's return. She had brought her love unsullied out of the shipwreck and twelve hundred francs.

Lucien, more than half intoxicated, poured out his woes to Coralie and Bérénice.

"You did quite right, my angel," said Coralie, with her arms about his neck. "Bérénice can easily negotiate your bills with Braulard."

The next morning Lucien awoke to an enchanted world of happiness made about him by Coralie. She was more loving and tender in these days than she had ever been; perhaps she thought that the wealth of love in her heart should make him amends for the poverty of their lodging. She looked bewitchingly charming, with the loose hair straying from under the crushed white silk handkerchief about her head; there was soft laughter in her eyes; her words were as bright as the first rays of sunrise that shone in through the windows, pouring a flood of gold upon such charming poverty.

Not that the room was squalid. The walls were covered with a sea-green paper, bordered with red; there was one mirror over the chimney-piece, and a second above the chest of drawers. The bare boards were covered with a cheap carpet, which Bérénice had bought in spite of Coralie's orders, and paid for out of her own little store. A wardrobe, with a glass door and a chest, held the lovers' clothing, the mahogany chairs were covered with blue cotton stuff, and Bérénice had managed to save a clock and a couple of china vases from the catastrophe, as well as four spoons and forks and half a dozen little spoons. The bedroom was entered from the dining-room, which might have belonged to a clerk with an income of twelve hundred francs. The kitchen was next the landing, and Bérénice slept above in an attic. The rent was not more than a hundred crowns.

The dismal house boasted a sham carriage entrance, the porter's box being contrived behind one of the useless leaves of the gate, and lighted by a peephole through which that personage watched the comings and goings of seventeen

families, for this hive was a "good-paying property," in auctioneer's phrase.

Lucien, looking round the room, discovered a desk, an easy-chair, paper, pens, and ink. The sight of Bérénice in high spirits (she was building hopes on Coralie's début at the Gymnase), and of Coralie herself conning her part with a knot of blue ribbon tied about it, drove all cares and anxieties from the sobered poet's mind.

"So long as nobody in society hears of this sudden come-down, we shall pull through," he said. "After all, we have four thousand five hundred francs before us. I will turn my new position in Royalist journalism to account. Tomorrow we shall start the *Réveil*; I am an old hand now, and I will make something out."

And Coralie, seeing nothing but love in the words, kissed the lips that uttered them. By this time Bérénice had set the table near the fire and served a modest breakfast of scrambled eggs, a couple of cutlets, coffee, and cream. Just then there came a knock at the door, and Lucien, to his astonishment, beheld three of the loyal friends of old days—d'Arthez, Léon Giraud, and Michel Chrestien. He was deeply touched, and asked them to share the breakfast.

"No; we have come on more serious business than condolence," said d'Arthez; "we know the whole story, we have just come from the Rue de Vendôme. You know my opinions, Lucien. Under any other circumstances I should be glad to hear that you had adopted my political convictions; but situated as you are with regard to the Liberal press, it is impossible for you to go over to the Ultras. Your life will be sullied, your character blighted forever. We have come to entreat you in the name of our friendship, weakened though it may be, not to soil yourself in this way. You have been prominent in attacking the Romantics, the Right, and the Government; you cannot now declare for the Government, the Right, and the Romantics."

"My reasons for the change are based on lofty grounds; the end will justify the means," said Lucien.

"Perhaps you do not fully comprehend our position on the side of the Government," said Léon Giraud. "The

Government, the Court, the Bourbons, the Absolutist Party, or to sum up in a general expression, the whole system opposed to the constitutional system, may be divided upon the question of the best means of extinguishing the Revolution, but is unanimous as to the advisability of extinguishing the newspapers. The *Réveil*, the *Foudre*, and the *Drapeau Blanc* have all been founded for the express purpose of replying to the slander, gibes, and railing of the Liberal press. I cannot approve them, for it is precisely this failure to recognize the grandeur of our priesthood that has led us to bring out a serious and self-respecting paper; which perhaps," he added parenthetically, "may exercise a worthy influence before very long, and win respect, and carry weight; but this Royalist artillery is destined for a first attempt at reprisals, the Liberals are to be paid back in their own coin—shaft for shaft, wound for wound.

"What can come of it, Lucien? The majority of newspaper readers incline to the Left; and in the press, as in warfare, the victory is with the big battalions. You will be blackguards, liars, enemies of the people; the other side will be defenders of their country, martyrs, men to be held in honor, though they may be even more hypocritical and slippery than their opponents. In these ways the pernicious influence of the press will be increased, while the most odious form of journalism will receive sanction. Insult and personalities will become a recognized privilege of the press; newspapers have taken this tone in the subscribers' interests; and when both sides have recourse to the same weapons, the standard is set and the general tone of journalism taken for granted. When the evil is developed to its fullest extent, restrictive laws will be followed by prohibitions; there will be a return of the censorship of the press imposed after the assassination of the Duc de Berri, and repealed since the opening of the Chambers. And do you know what the nation will conclude from the debate? The people will believe the insinuations of the Liberal press; they will think that the Bourbons mean to attack the right of property acquired by the Revolution, and some fine day they will rise and shake off the Bourbons. You are not only soiling your

life, Lucien, you are going over to the losing side. You are too young, too lately a journalist, too little initiated into the secret springs of motive and the tricks of the craft, you have aroused too much jealousy, not to fall a victim to the general hue and cry that will be raised against you in the Liberal newspapers. You will be drawn into the fray by party spirit now still at fever-heat; though the fever, which spent itself in violence in 1815 and 1816, now appears in debates in the Chambers and polemics in the papers."

"I am not quite a featherhead, my friends," said Lucien, "though you may choose to see a poet in me. Whatever may happen, I shall gain one solid advantage which no Liberal victory can give me. By the time your victory is won, I shall have gained my end."

"We will cut off—your hair," said Michel Chrestien with a laugh.

"I shall have children by that time," said Lucien; "and if you cut off my head, it will not matter."

The three could make nothing of Lucien. Intercourse with the great world had developed in him the pride of caste, the vanities of the aristocrat. The poet thought, and not without reason, that there was a fortune in his good looks and intellect, accompanied by the name and title of Rubempré. Mme. d'Espard and Mme. de Bargeton held him fast by this clew, as a child holds a cockchafer by a string. Lucien's flight was circumscribed. The words, "He is one of us, he is sound," accidentally overheard but three days ago in Mlle. des Touches's salon, had turned his head. The Duc de Lenoncourt, the Duc de Navarreins, the Duc de Grandlieu, Rastignac, Blondet, the lovely Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, the Comte d'Escrignon, and des Lupeaulx, all the most influential people at Court in fact, had congratulated him on his conversion, and completed his intoxication.

"Then there is no more to be said," d'Arthez rejoined. "You, of all men, will find it hard to keep clean hands and self-respect. I know you, Lucien; you will feel it acutely when you are despised by the very men to whom you offer yourself."

The three took leave, and not one of them gave him a

friendly handshake. Lucien was thoughtful and sad for a few minutes.

"Oh! never mind those ninnies," cried Coralie, springing upon his knee and putting her beautiful arms about his neck. "They take life seriously, and life is a joke. Besides, you are going to be Count Lucien de Rubempré. I will wheedle the Chancellerie if there is no other way. I know how to come round that rake of a des Lupeaulx, who will sign your patent. Did I not tell you, Lucien, that at the last you should have Coralie's dead body for a stepping-stone?"

Next day Lucien allowed his name to appear in the list of contributors to the *Réveil*. His name was announced in the prospectus with a flourish of trumpets, and the Ministry took care that a hundred thousand copies should be scattered abroad far and wide. There was a dinner at Robert's, two doors away from Frascati's, to celebrate the inauguration, and the whole band of Royalist writers for the press were present. Martainville was there, and Auger and Destains, and a host of others, still living, who "did Monarchy and Religion," to use the familiar expression coined for them. Nathan had also enlisted under the banner, for he was thinking of starting a theater, and not unreasonably held that it was better to have the licensing authorities for him than against him.

"We will pay the Liberals out," cried Merlin.

"Gentlemen," said Nathan, "if we are for war, let us have war in earnest; we must not carry it on with pop-guns. Let us fall upon all Classics and Liberals without distinction of age or sex, and put them all to the sword with ridicule. There must be no quarter."

"We must act honorably; there must be no bribing with copies of books or presents; no taking money of publishers. We must inaugurate a Restoration of Journalism."

"Good!" said Martainville. "*Justum et tenacem propositi virum!* Let us be implacable and virulent. I will give out La Fayette for the prince of harlequins that he is!"

"And I will undertake the heroes of the *Constitutionnel*," added Lucien; "Sergeant Mercier, M. Jouy's Complete Works, and 'the illustrious orators of the Left.'"

A war of extermination was unanimously resolved upon, and by one o'clock in the morning all shades of opinion were merged and drowned, together with every glimmer of sense, in a flaming bowl of punch.

"We have had a fine Monarchical and Religious jollification," remarked an illustrious reveler in the doorway as he went.

That comment appeared in the next day's issue of the *Miroir* through the good offices of a publisher among the guests, and became historic. Lucien was supposed to be the traitor who blabbed. His defection gave the signal for a terrific hubbub in the Liberal camp; Lucien was the butt of the Opposition newspapers, and ridiculed unmercifully. The whole history of his Sonnets was given to the public. Dauriat was said to prefer a first loss of a thousand crowns to the risk of publishing the verses; Lucien was called "the Poet *sans* Sonnets"; and one morning, in that very paper in which he had so brilliant a beginning, he read the following lines, significant enough for him, but barely intelligible to other readers:

\* \* If M. Dauriat persistently withholds the Sonnets of the future Petrarch from publication, we will act like generous foes. We will open our own columns to his poems, which must be piquant indeed, to judge by the following specimen obligingly communicated by a friend of the author.

And close upon that ominous preface followed a sonnet entitled "The Thistle" (*Le Chardon*):

A chance-come seedling, springing up one day  
Among the flowers in a garden fair,  
Made boast that splendid colors bright and rare  
Its claims to lofty lineage should display.

So for a while they suffered it to stay;  
But with such insolence it flourished there,  
That, out of patience with its braggart's air,  
They bade it prove its claims without delay.

It bloomed forthwith; but ne'er was blundering clown  
 Upon the boards more promptly hooted down;  
 The sister flowers began to jeer and laugh,

The owner flung it out. At close of day  
 A solitary jackass came to bray—  
 A common Thistle's fitting epitaph.

Lucien read the words through scalding tears.

Vernou touched elsewhere on Lucien's gambling propensities, and spoke of the forthcoming *Archer of Charles IX.* as "anti-national" in its tendency, the writer siding with Catholic cut-throats against their Calvinist victims.

Another week found the quarrel embittered. Lucien had counted upon his friend Étienne; Étienne owed him a thousand francs, and there had been besides a private understanding between them; but Étienne Lousteau during the interval became his sworn foe, and this was the manner of it.

For the past three months Nathan had been smitten with Florine's charms, and much at a loss how to rid himself of Lousteau his rival, who was in fact dependent upon the actress. And now came Nathan's opportunity: when Florine was frantic with distress over the failure of the *Panorama-Dramatique*, which left her without an engagement, he went as Lucien's colleague to beg Coralie to ask for a part for Florine in a play of his which was about to be produced at the Gymnase. Then Nathan went to Florine and made capital with her out of the service done by the promise of a conditional engagement. Ambition had turned Florine's head; she did not hesitate. She had had time to gauge Lousteau pretty thoroughly. Lousteau's courses were weakening his will, and here was Nathan with his ambitions in politics and literature, and energies strong as his cravings. Florine proposed to reappear on the stage with renewed éclat, so she handed over Matifat's correspondence to Nathan. Nathan drove a bargain for them with Matifat, and took the sixth share of Finot's review in exchange for the compromising billets. After this, Florine was installed in sumptuously furnished apartments in the Rue Hauteville,



where she took Nathan for her protector in the face of the theatrical and journalistic world.

Lousteau was terribly overcome. He wept (towards the close of a dinner given by his friends to console him in his affliction). In the course of that banquet it was decided that Nathan had not acted unfairly; several writers present—Finot and Vernou, for instance,—knew of Florine's fervid admiration for dramatic literature; but they all agreed that Lucien had behaved very ill when he arranged that business at the Gymnase; he had indeed broken the most sacred laws of friendship. Party spirit and zeal to serve his new friends had led the Royalist poet on to sin beyond forgiveness.

"Nathan was carried away by passion," pronounced Bixiou, "while this 'distinguished provincial,' as Blondet calls him, is simply scheming for his own selfish ends."

And so it came to pass that deep plots were laid by all parties alike to rid themselves of this little upstart intruder of a poet who wanted to eat everybody up. Vernou bore Lucien a personal grudge, and undertook to keep a tight hand on him; and Finot declared that Lucien had betrayed the secret of the combination against Matifat, and thereby swindled him (Finot) out of fifty thousand francs. Nathan, acting on Florine's advice, gained Finot's support by selling him the sixth share for fifteen thousand francs, and Lousteau consequently lost his commission. His thousand crowns had vanished away; he could not forgive Lucien for this treacherous blow (as he supposed it) dealt to his interests. The wounds of vanity refuse to heal if oxide of silver gets into them.

No words, no amount of description, can depict the wrath of an author in a paroxysm of mortified vanity, nor the energy which he discovers when stung by the poisoned darts of sarcasm; but, on the other hand, the man that is roused to fighting fury by a personal attack usually subsides very promptly. The more phlegmatic race, who take these things quietly, lay their account with the oblivion which speedily overtakes the spiteful article. These are the truly courageous men of letters; and if the weaklings seem at first to

be the strong men, they cannot hold out for any length of time.

During the first fortnight, while the fury was upon him, Lucien poured a perfect hailstorm of articles into the Royalist papers, in which he shared the responsibilities of criticism with Hector Merlin. He was always in the breach, pounding away with all his might in the *Réveil*, backed up by Martainville, the only one among his associates who stood by him without an afterthought. Martainville was not in the secret of certain understandings made and ratified amid after-dinner jokes, or at Dauriat's in the Wooden Galleries, or behind the scenes at the Vaudeville, when journalists of either side met on neutral ground.

When Lucien went to the greenroom of the Vaudeville, he met with no welcome; the men of his own party held out a hand to shake, the others cut him; and all the while Hector Merlin and Théodore Gaillard fraternized unblushingly with Finot, Lousteau, and Vernou, and the rest of the journalists who were known for "good fellows."

The greenroom of the Vaudeville in those days was a hot-bed of gossip, as well as a neutral ground where men of every shade of opinion could meet; so much so that the president of a court of law, after reproving a learned brother in a certain council chamber for "sweeping the greenroom with his gown," met the subject of his strictures, gown to gown, in the greenroom of the Vaudeville. Lousteau, in time, shook hands again with Nathan; Finot came thither almost every evening; and Lucien, whenever he could spare the time, went to the Vaudeville to watch the enemies, who showed no sign of relenting towards the unfortunate boy.

In the time of the Restoration party hatred was far more bitter than in our day. Intensity of feeling is diminished in our high-pressure age. The critic cuts a book to pieces and shakes hands with the author afterwards, and the victim must keep on good terms with his slaughterer, or run the gauntlet of innumerable jokes at his expense. If he refuses, he is unsociable, eaten up with self-love, he is sulky and rancorous, he bears malice, he is a bad bedfellow. To-day let an author receive a treacherous stab in the back, let him

avoid the snares set for him with base hypocrisy, and endure the most unhandsome treatment, he must still exchange greetings with his assassin, who, for that matter, claims the esteem and friendship of his victim. Everything can be excused and justified in an age which has transformed vice into virtue and virtue into vice. Good-fellowship has come to be the most sacred of our liberties; the representatives of the most opposite opinions courteously blunt the edge of their words, and fence with buttoned foils. But in those almost forgotten days the same theater could scarcely hold certain Royalist and Liberal journalists; the most malignant provocation was offered, glances were like pistol-shots, the least spark produced an explosion of quarrel. Who has not heard his neighbor's half-smothered oath on the entrance of some man in the forefront of the battle on the opposing side? There were but the two parties—Royalists and Liberals, Classics and Romantics. You found the same hatred masquerading in either form, and no longer wondered at the scaffolds of the Convention.

Lucien had been a Liberal and a hot Voltairean; now he was a rabid Royalist and a Romantic. Martainville, the only one among his colleagues who really liked him and stood by him loyally, was more hated by the Liberals than any man on the Royalist side, and this fact drew down all the hate of the Liberals on Lucien's head. Martainville's stanch friendship injured Lucien. Political parties show scanty gratitude to outpost sentinels, and leave leaders of forlorn hopes to their fate; 'tis a rule of warfare which holds equally good in matters political, to keep with the main body of the army if you mean to succeed. The spite of the small Liberal papers fastened at once on the opportunity of coupling the two names, and flung them into each other's arms. Their friendship, real or imaginary, brought down upon them both a series of articles written by pens dipped in gall. Félicien Vernou was furious with jealousy of Lucien's social success; and believed, like all his old associates, in the poet's approaching elevation.

The fiction of Lucien's treason was embellished with every kind of aggravating circumstance; he was called Judas the

Less, Martainville being Judas the Great, for Martainville was supposed (rightly or wrongly) to have given up the Bridge of Pecq to the foreign invaders. Lucien said jestingly to des Lupeaulx that he himself, surely, had given up the Asses' Bridge.

Lucien's luxurious life, hollow though it was and founded on expectations, had estranged his friends. They could not forgive him for the carriage which he had put down—for them he was still rolling about in it—nor yet for the splendors of the Rue de Vendôme which he had left. All of them felt instinctively that nothing was beyond the reach of this young and handsome poet, with intellect enough and to spare; they themselves had trained him in corruption; and, therefore, they left no stone unturned to ruin him.

Some few days before Coralie's first appearance at the Gymnase, Lucien and Hector Merlin went arm in arm to the Vaudeville. Merlin was scolding his friend for giving a helping hand to Nathan in Florine's affair.

"You then and there made two mortal enemies of Lousteau and Nathan," he said. "I gave you good advice, and you took no notice of it. You gave praise, you did them a good turn—you will be well punished for your kindness. Florine and Coralie will never live in peace on the same stage; both will wish to be first. You can only defend Coralie in our papers; and Nathan not only has a pull as a dramatic author, he can control the dramatic criticism in the Liberal newspapers. He has been a journalist a little longer than you!"

The words responded to Lucien's inward misgivings. Neither Nathan nor Gaillard was treating him with the frankness which he had a right to expect, but so new a convert could hardly complain. Gaillard utterly confounded Lucien by saying roundly that newcomers must give proofs of their sincerity for some time before their party could trust them. There was more jealousy than he had imagined in the inner circles of Royalist and Ministerial journalism. The jealousy of curs fighting for a bone is apt to appear in the human species when there is a loaf to divide; there

is the same growling and showing of teeth, the same characteristics come out.

In every possible way these writers of articles tried to injure each other with those in power; they brought reciprocal accusations of lukewarm zeal; they invented the most treacherous ways of getting rid of a rival. There had been none of this internecine warfare among the Liberals; they were too far from power, too hopelessly out of favor; and Lucien, amid the inextricable tangle of ambitions, had neither the courage to draw sword and cut the knot, nor the patience to unravel it. He could not be the Beaumarchais, the Aretino, the Fréron of his epoch; he was not made of such stuff; he thought of nothing but his one desire, the patent of nobility; for he saw clearly that for him such a restoration meant a wealthy marriage, and, the title once secured, chance and his good looks would do the rest. This was all his plan; and Étienne Lousteau, who had confided so much to him, knew his secret, knew how to deal a death-blow to the poet of Angoulême. That very night, as Lucien and Merlin went to the Vaudeville, Etienne had laid a terrible trap, into which an inexperienced boy could not but fall.

"Here is our handsome Lucien," said Finot, drawing des Lupeaulx in the direction of the poet, and shaking hands with feline amiability. "I cannot think of another example of such rapid success," continued Finot, looking from des Lupeaulx to Lucien. "There are two sorts of success in Paris: there is a fortune in solid cash, which anyone can amass, and there is the intangible fortune of connections, position, or a footing in certain circles inaccessible for certain persons, however rich they may be. Now my friend here——"

"Our friend," interposed des Lupeaulx, smiling blandly.

"Our friend," repeated Finot, patting Lucien's hand, "has made a brilliant success from this point of view. Truth to tell, Lucien has more in him, more gift, more wit than the rest of us that envy him, and he is enchantingly handsome besides; his old friends cannot forgive him for his success—they call it luck."

"Luck of that sort never comes to fools or incapables," said des Lupeaulx. "Can you call Bonaparte's fortune luck, eh? There were a score of applicants for the command of the army of Italy, just as there are a hundred young men at this moment who would like to have an entrance to Mlle. des Touches's house; people are coupling her name with yours already in society, my dear boy," said des Lupeaulx, clapping Lucien on the shoulder. "Ah! you are in high favor. Mme. d'Espard, Mme. de Bargeton, and Mme. de Montcornet are wild about you. You are going to Mme. Firmiani's party to-night, are you not, and to the Duchesse de Grandlieu's rout to-morrow?"

"Yes," said Lucien.

"Allow me to introduce a young banker to you, a M. du Tillet; you ought to be acquainted, he has contrived to make a great fortune in a short time."

Lucien and du Tillet bowed, and entered into conversation, and the banker asked Lucien to dinner. Finot and des Lupeaulx, a well-matched pair, knew each other well enough to keep upon good terms; they turned away to continue their chat on one of the sofas in the greenroom, and left Lucien with du Tillet, Merlin, and Nathan.

"By the way, my friend," said Finot, "tell me how things stand. Is there really somebody behind Lucien? For he is the *bête noire* of my staff; and before allowing them to plot against him, I thought I should like to know whether, in your opinion, it would be better to baffle them and keep well with him."

The Master of Requests and Finot looked at each other very closely for a moment or two.

"My dear fellow," said des Lupeaulx, "how can you imagine that the Marquise d'Espard, or Châtelet, or Mme. de Bargeton—who has procured the Baron's nomination to the prefecture and the title of Count, so as to return in triumph to Angoulême—how can you suppose that any of them will forgive Lucien for his attacks on them? They dropped him down in the Royalist ranks to crush him out of existence. At this moment they are looking round for any excuse for not fulfilling the promises they made to

that boy. Help them to some; you will do the greatest possible service to the two women, and some day or other they will remember it. I am in their secrets; I was surprised to find how much they hated the little fellow. This Lucien might have rid himself of his bitterest enemy (Mme. de Bargeton) by desisting from his attacks on terms which a woman loves to grant—do you take me? He is young and handsome, he should have drowned her hate in torrents of love, he would be Comte de Rubempré by this time; the Cuttlefish-bone would have obtained some sinecure for him, some post in the Royal Household. Lucien would have made a very pretty reader to Louis XVIII.; he might have been librarian somewhere or other, Master of Requests for a joke, Master of the Revels, what you please. The young fool has missed his chance. Perhaps that is his unpardonable sin. Instead of imposing his conditions, he has accepted them. When Lucien was caught with the bait of the patent of nobility, the Baron Châtelet made a great step. Coralie has been the ruin of that boy. If he had not had the actress for his mistress, he would have turned again to the Cuttlefish-bone; and he would have had her too.”

“Then we can knock him over?”

“How?” des Lupeaulx asked carelessly. He saw a way of gaining credit with the Marquise d’Espard for this service.

“He is under contract to write for Lousteau’s paper, and we can the better hold him to his agreement because he has not a sou. If we tickle up the Keeper of the Seals with a facetious article, and prove that Lucien wrote it, he will consider that Lucien is unworthy of the King’s favor. We have a plot on hand besides. Coralie will be ruined, and our distinguished provincial will lose his head when his mistress is hissed off the stage and left without an engagement. When once the patent is suspended, we will laugh at the victim’s aristocratic pretensions, and allude to his mother the nurse and his father the apothecary. Lucien’s courage is only skin-deep, he will collapse; we will send him back to his provinces. Nathan made Florine sell me Matifat’s sixth share of the review, I was able to buy; Dauriat and I are the only proprietors now; we might come to an understand-

ing, you and I, and the review might be taken over for the benefit of the Court. I stipulated for the restitution of my sixth before I undertook to protect Nathan and Florine; they let me have it, and I must help them; but I wished to know first how Lucien stood——”

“You deserve your name,” said des Lupeaulx. “I like a man of your sort——”

“Very well. Then can you arrange a definite engagement for Florine?” asked Finot.

“Yes, but rid us of Lucien, for Rastignac and de Marsay never wish to hear of him again.”

“Sleep in peace,” returned Finot. “Nathan and Merlin will always have articles ready for Gaillard, who will promise to take them; Lucien will never get a line into the paper. We will cut off his supplies. There is only Martainville’s paper left him in which to defend himself and Coralie; what can a single paper do against so many?”

“I will let you know the weak points of the Ministry; but get Lucien to write that article and hand over the manuscript,” said des Lupeaulx, who refrained carefully from informing Finot that Lucien’s promised patent was nothing but a joke.

When des Lupeaulx had gone, Finot went to Lucien, and taking the good-natured tone which deceives so many victims, he explained that he could not possibly afford to lose his contributor, and at the same time he shrank from taking proceedings which might ruin him with his friends of the other side. Finot himself liked a man who was strong enough to change his opinions. They were pretty sure to come across one another, he and Lucien, and might be mutually helpful in a thousand little ways. Lucien, besides, needed a sure man in the Liberal party to attack the Ultras and men in office who might refuse to help him.

“Suppose that they play you false, what will you do?” Finot ended. “Suppose that some Minister fancies that he has you fast by the halter of your apostasy, and turns the cold shoulder on you? You will be glad to set on a few dogs to snap at his legs, will you not? Very well. But you have made a deadly enemy of Lousteau; he is thirsting



for your blood. You and Félicien are not on speaking terms. I only remain to you. It is a rule of the craft to keep a good understanding with every man of real ability. In the world which you are about to enter you can do me services in return for mine with the press. But business first. Let me have purely literary articles; they will not compromise you, and we shall have executed our agreement."

Lucien saw nothing but good-fellowship and a shrewd eye to business in Finot's offer; Finot and des Lupeaulx had flattered him, and he was in a good humor. He actually thanked Finot!

Ambitious men, like all those who can only make their way by the help of others and of circumstances, are bound to lay their plans very carefully and to adhere very closely to the course of conduct on which they determine; it is a cruel moment in the lives of such aspirants when some unknown power brings the fabric of their fortunes to some severe test and everything gives way at once; threads are snapped or entangled, and misfortune appears on every side. Let a man lose his head in the confusion, it is all over with him; but if he can resist this first revolt of circumstance, if he can stand erect until the tempest passes over, or make a supreme effort and reach the serene sphere about the storm—then he is really strong. To every man, unless he is born rich, there comes sooner or later "his fatal week," as it must be called. For Napoleon, for instance, that week was the Retreat from Moscow. It had begun now for Lucien.

Social and literary success had come to him too easily; he had had such luck that he was bound to know reverses and to see men and circumstances turn against him.

The first blow was the heaviest and the most keenly felt, for it touched Lucien where he thought himself invulnerable—in his heart and his love. Coralie might not be clever, but hers was a noble nature, and she possessed the great actress's faculty of suddenly standing aloof from self. This strange phenomenon is subject, until it degenerates into a habit with long practice, to the caprices of character, and not seldom an admirable delicacy of feeling in actresses who are still young. Coralie, to all appearance bold and wan-

ton, as her part required, was in reality girlish and timid, and love had wrought in her a revulsion of her woman's heart against the comedian's mask. Art, the supreme art of feigning passion and feeling, had not yet triumphed over nature in her; she shrank before a great audience from the utterance that belongs to Love alone; and Coralie suffered besides from another true woman's weakness—she needed success. born stage queen though she was. She could not confront an audience with which she was out of sympathy; she was nervous when she appeared on the stage, a cold reception paralyzed her. Each new part gave her the terrible sensations of a first appearance. Applause produced a sort of intoxication which gave her encouragement without flattering her vanity; at a murmur of dissatisfaction or before a silent house, she flagged; but a great audience following attentively, admiringly, willing to be pleased, electrified Coralie. She felt at once in communication with the nobler qualities of all those listeners; she felt that she possessed the power of stirring their souls and carrying them with her. But if this action and reaction of the audience upon the actress reveals the nervous organization of genius, it shows no less clearly the poor child's sensitiveness and delicacy. Lucien had discovered the treasures of her nature; had learned in the past months that this woman who loved him was still so much of a girl. And Coralie was unskilled in the wiles of an actress—she could not fight her own battles nor protect herself against the machinations of jealousy behind the scenes. Florine was jealous of her, and Florine was as dangerous and depraved as Coralie was simple and generous. Rôles must come to find Coralie; she was too proud to implore authors or to submit to dishonoring conditions; she would not give herself to the first journalist who persecuted her with his advances and threatened her with his pen. Genius is rare enough in the extraordinary art of the stage; but genius is only one condition of success among many, and is positively hurtful unless it is accompanied by a genius for intrigue in which Coralie was utterly lacking.

Lucien knew how much his friend would suffer on her

first appearance at the Gymnase, and was anxious at all costs to obtain a success for her; but all the money remaining from the sale of the furniture and all Lucien's earnings had been sunk in costumes, in the furniture of a dressing-room, and the expenses of a first appearance.

A few days later, Lucien made up his mind to a humiliating step for love's sake. He took Fendant and Cavalier's bills, and went to the Golden Cocoon in the Rue des Bourdonnais. He would ask Camusot to discount them. The poet had not fallen so low that he could make this attempt quite coolly. There had been many a sharp struggle first, and the way to that decision had been paved with many dreadful thoughts. Nevertheless, he arrived at last in the dark, cheerless little private office that looked out upon a yard, and found Camusot seated gravely there; this was not Coralie's infatuated adorer, not the easy-natured, indolent, credulous libertine, whom he had known hitherto as Camusot, but a heavy father of a family, a merchant grown old in shrewd expedients of business and respectable virtues, wearing a magistrate's mask of judicial prudery; this Camusot was the cool, business-like head of the firm surrounded by clerks, green cardboard boxes, pigeonholes, invoices, and samples, and fortified by the presence of a wife and a plainly-dressed daughter. Lucien trembled from head to foot as he approached; for the worthy merchant, like the money-lenders, turned cool, indifferent eyes upon him.

"Here are two or three bills, monsieur," he said, standing beside the merchant, who did not rise from his desk. "If you will take them of me, you will oblige me extremely."

"You have taken something of *me*, monsieur," said Camusot; "I do not forget it."

On this, Lucien explained Coralie's predicament. He spoke in a low voice, bending to murmur his explanation, so that Camusot could hear the heavy throbbing of the humiliated poet's heart. It was no part of Camusot's plans that Coralie should suffer a check. He listened, smiling to himself over the signatures on the bills (for, as a judge at the Tribunal of Commerce, he knew how the booksellers stood), but in the end he gave Lucien four thousand five

hundred francs for them, stipulating that he should add the formula "For value received in silks."

Lucien went straight to Braulard, and made arrangements for a good reception. Braulard promised to come to the dress rehearsal, to determine on the points where his "Romans" should work their fleshy clappers to bring down the house in applause. Lucien gave the rest of the money to Coralie (he did not tell her how he had come by it), and allayed her anxieties and the fears of Bérénice, who was sorely troubled over their daily expenses.

Martainville came several times to hear Coralie rehearse, and he knew more of the stage than most men of his time; several Royalist writers had promised favorable articles; Lucien had not a suspicion of the impending disaster.

A fatal event occurred on the evening before Coralie's début. D'Arthez's book had appeared; and the editor of Merlin's paper, considering Lucien to be the best qualified man on the staff, gave him the book to review. He owed his unlucky reputation to those articles on Nathan's work. There were several men in the office at the time, for all the staff had been summoned; Martainville was explaining that the party warfare with the Liberals must be waged on certain lines. Nathan, Merlin, all the contributors in fact, were talking of Léon Giraud's paper, and remarking that its influence was the more pernicious because the language was guarded, cool, moderate. People were beginning to speak of the circle in the Rue des Quatre-Vents as a second Convention. It had been decided that the Royalist papers were to wage a systematic war of extermination against these dangerous opponents, who, indeed, at a later day, were destined to sow the doctrines that drove the Bourbons into exile; but that was only after the most brilliant of Royalist writers had joined them for the sake of a mean revenge.

D'Arthez's absolutist opinions were not known; it was taken for granted that he shared the views of his clique, he fell under the same anathema, and he was to be the first victim. His book was to be honored with "a slashing article," to use the consecrated formula. Lucien refused to write the article. Great was the commotion among the

leading Royalist writers thus met in conclave. Lucien was told plainly that a renegade could not do as he pleased; if it did not suit his views to take the side of the Monarchy and Religion, he could go back to the other camp. Merlin and Martainville took him aside and begged him, as his friends, to remember that he would simply hand Coralie over to the tender mercies of the Liberal papers, for she would find no champions on the Royalist and Ministerial side. Her acting was certain to provoke a hot battle, and the kind of discussion which every actress longs to arouse.

"You don't understand it in the least," said Martainville; "if she plays for three months amid a cross fire of criticism, she will make thirty thousand francs when she goes on tour in the provinces at the end of the season; and here are you about to sacrifice Coralie and your own future, and to quarrel with your own bread and butter, all for a scruple that will always stand in your way, and ought to be got rid of at once."

Lucien was forced to choose between d'Arthez and Coralie. His mistress would be ruined unless he dealt his friend a deathblow in the *Réveil* and the great newspaper. Poor poet! He went home with death in his soul; and by the fireside he sat and read that finest production of modern literature. Tears fell fast over it as the pages turned. For a long while he hesitated, but at last he took up his pen and wrote a sarcastic article of the kind that he understood so well, taking the book as children might take some bright bird to strip it of its plumage and torture it. His sardonic jests were sure to tell. Again he turned to the book, and as he read it over a second time, his better self awoke. In the dead of night he hurried across Paris, and stood outside d'Arthez's house. He looked up at the windows and saw the faint pure gleam of light in the panes, as he had so often seen it, with a feeling of admiration for the noble steadfastness of that truly great nature. For some moments he stood irresolute on the curbstone; he had not courage to go further; but his good angel urged him on. He tapped at the door and opened, and found d'Arthez sitting reading in a fireless room.

"What has happened?" asked d'Arthez, for news of some dreadful kind was visible in Lucien's ghastly face.

"Your book is sublime, d'Arthez," said Lucien, with tears in his eyes, "and they have ordered me to write an attack upon it."

"Poor boy! the bread that they give you is hard indeed!" said d'Arthez.

"I only ask for one favor, keep my visit a secret and leave me to my hell, to the occupations of the damned. Perhaps it is impossible to attain to success until the heart is seared and callous in every most sensitive spot."

"The same as ever!" cried d'Arthez.

"Do you think me a base poltroon? No, d'Arthez; no, I am a boy half crazed with love," and he told his story.

"Let us look at the article," said d'Arthez, touched by all that Lucien said of Coralie.

Lucien held out the manuscript; d'Arthez read, and could not help smiling.

"Oh, what a fatal waste of intellect!" he began. But at the sight of Lucien overcome with grief in the opposite armchair, he checked himself.

"Will you leave it with me to correct? I will let you have it again to-morrow," he went on. "Flippancy depreciates a work; serious and conscientious criticism is sometimes praise in itself. I know the way to make your article more honorable both for yourself and for me. Besides, I know my faults well enough."

"When you climb a hot, shadowless hillside, you sometimes find fruit to quench your torturing thirst; and I have found it here and now," said Lucien, as he sprang sobbing to d'Arthez's arms and kissed his friend on the forehead. "It seems to me that I am leaving my conscience in your keeping; some day I will come to you and ask for it again."

"I look upon a periodical repentance as great hypocrisy," d'Arthez said solemnly; "repentance becomes a sort of indemnity for wrongdoing. Repentance is virginity of soul, which we must keep for God; a man who repents twice is a horrible sycophant. I am afraid that you regard repentance as absolution."

Lucien went slowly back to the Rue de la Lune, stricken dumb by those words.

Next morning d'Arthez sent back his article, recast throughout, and Lucien sent it in to the review; but from that day melancholy preyed upon him, and he could not always disguise his mood. That evening, when the theater was full, he experienced for the first time the paroxysm of nervous terror caused by a *début*; terror aggravated in his case by all the strength of his love. Vanity of every kind was involved. He looked over the rows of faces as a criminal eyes the judges and the jury on whom his life depends. A murmur would have set him quivering; any slight incident upon the stage, Coralie's exits and entrances, the slightest modulation of the tones of her voice, would perturb him beyond all reason.

The play in which Coralie made her first appearance at the Gymnase was a piece of the kind which sometimes falls flat at first, and afterwards has immense success. It fell flat that night. Coralie was not applauded when she came on, and the chilly reception reacted upon her. The only applause came from Camusot's box, and various persons posted in the balcony and galleries silenced Camusot with repeated cries of "Hush!" The galleries even silenced the *claqueurs* when they led off with exaggerated salvoes. Martainville applauded bravely; Nathan, Merlin, and the treacherous Florine followed his example; but it was clear that the piece was a failure. A crowd gathered in Coralie's dressing-room and consoled her, till she had no courage left. She went home in despair, less for her own sake than for Lucien's.

"Braulard has betrayed us," Lucien said.

Coralie was heartstricken. The next day found her in a high fever, utterly unfit to play, face to face with the thought that she had been cut short in her career. Lucien hid the papers from her, and looked them over in the dining-room. The reviewers one and all attributed the failure of the piece to Coralie; she had over-estimated her strength; she might be the delight of a boulevard audience, but she was out of her element at the Gymnase; she had been inspired by a laudable ambition, but she had not taken her powers

into account; she had chosen a part to which she was quite unequal. Lucien read on through a pile of penny-a-lining, put together on the same system as his attack upon Nathan. Milo of Crotona, when he found his hands fast in the oak which he himself had cleft, was not more furious than Lucien. He grew haggard with rage. His friends gave Coralie the most treacherous advice, in the language of kindly counsel and friendly interest. She should play (according to these authorities) all kinds of rôles, which the treacherous writers of these unblushing *feuilletons* knew to be utterly unsuited to her genius. And these were the Royalist papers, led off by Nathan. As for the Liberal press, all the weapons which Lucien had used were now turned against him.

Coralie heard a sob, followed by another and another. She sprang out of bed to find Lucien, and saw the papers. Nothing would satisfy her but she must read them all; and when she had read them, she went back to bed, and lay there in silence.

Florine was in the plot; she had foreseen the outcome; she had studied Coralie's part, and was ready to take her place. The management, unwilling to give up the piece, was ready to take Florine in Coralie's stead. When the manager came, he found poor Coralie sobbing and exhausted on her bed; but when he began to say, in Lucien's presence, that Florine knew the part, and that the play must be given that evening, Coralie sprang up at once.

"I will play!" she cried, and sank fainting on the floor.

So Florine took the part, and made her reputation in it; for the piece succeeded, the newspapers all sang her praises, and from that time forth Florine was the great actress whom we all know. Florine's success exasperated Lucien to the highest degree.

"A wretched girl, whom you helped to earn her bread! If the Gymnase prefers to do so, let the management pay you to cancel your engagement. I shall be the Comte de Rubempré; I will make my fortune, and you shall be my wife."

"What nonsense!" said Coralie, looking at him with wan eyes.



"Nonsense!" repeated he. "Very well, wait a few days, and you shall live in a fine house, you shall have a carriage, and I will write a part for you!"

He took two thousand francs, and hurried to Frascati's. For seven hours the unhappy victim of the Furies watched his varying luck, and outwardly seemed cool and self-contained. He experienced both extremes of fortune during that day and part of the night that followed; at one time he possessed as much as thirty thousand francs, and he came out at last without a sou. In the Rue de la Lune he found Finot waiting for him with a request for one of his short articles. Lucien so far forgot himself that he complained.

"Oh, it is not all rosy," returned Finot. "You made your right-about-face in such a way that you were bound to lose the support of the Liberal press, and the Liberals are far stronger in print than all the Ministerialist and Royalist papers put together. A man should never leave one camp for another until he has made a comfortable berth for himself, by way of consolation for the losses that he must expect; and in any case, a prudent politician will see his friends first, and give them his reasons for going over, and take their opinions. You can still act together; they sympathize with you, and you agree to give mutual help. Nathan and Merlin did that before they went over. Hawks don't pick out hawks' eyes. You were as innocent as a lamb; you will be forced to show your teeth to your new party to make anything out of them. You have been necessarily sacrificed to Nathan. I cannot conceal from you that your article on d'Arthez has roused a terrific hubbub. Marat is a saint compared with you. You will be attacked, and your book will be a failure. How far have things gone with your romance?"

"These are the last proof-sheets."

"All the anonymous articles against that young d'Arthez in the Ministerialist and Ultra papers are set down to you. The *Réveil* is poking fun at the set in the Rue des Quatre-Vents, and the hits are the more telling because they are funny. There is a whole serious political coterie at the

back of Léon Giraud's paper; they will come into power too, sooner or later."

"I have not written a line in the *Réveil* this week past."

"Very well. Keep my short articles in mind. Write fifty of them straight off, and I will pay you for them in a lump; but they must be of the same color as the paper." And Finot, with seeming carelessness, gave Lucien an edifying anecdote of the Keeper of the Seals, a piece of current gossip, he said, for the subject of one of the papers.

Eager to retrieve his losses at play, Lucien shook off his dejection, summoned up his energy and youthful force, and wrote thirty articles of two columns each. These finished, he went to Dauriat's, partly because he felt sure of meeting Finot there, and he wished to give the articles to Finot in person; partly because he wished for an explanation of the non-appearance of the *Marguerites*. He found the bookseller's shop full of his enemies. All the talk immediately ceased as he entered. Put under the ban of journalism, his courage rose, and once more he said to himself, as he had said in the alley at the Luxembourg, "I will triumph."

Dauriat was neither amiable nor inclined to patronize; he was sarcastic in tone, and determined not to bate an inch of his rights. The *Marguerites* should appear when it suited his purpose; he should wait until Lucien was in a position to secure the success of the book; it was his, he had bought it outright. When Lucien asserted that Dauriat was bound to publish the *Marguerites* by the very nature of the contract, and the relative positions of the parties to the agreement, Dauriat flatly contradicted him, said that no publisher could be compelled by law to publish at a loss, and that he himself was the best judge of the expediency of producing the book. There was, besides, a remedy open to Lucien, as any court of law would admit—the poet was quite welcome to take his verses to a Royalist publisher upon the repayment of the thousand crowns.

Lucien went away. Dauriat's moderate tone had exasperated him even more than his previous arrogance at their first interview. So the *Marguerites* would not appear until Lucien had found a host of formidable supporters, or grown

formidable himself! He walked home slowly, so oppressed and out of heart that he felt ready for suicide. Coralie lay in bed, looking white and ill.

"She must have a part, or she will die," said Bérénice, as Lucien dressed for a great evening party at Mlle. des Touches's house in the Rue du Mont Blanc. Des Lupeaulx and Vignon and Blondet were to be there, as well as Mme. d'Espard and Mme. de Bargeton.

The party was given in honor of Conti, the great composer, owner likewise of one of the most famous voices off the stage, Cinti, Pasta, Garcia, Levasseur, and two or three celebrated amateurs in society not excepted. Lucien saw the Marquise, her cousin, and Mme. de Montcornet sitting together, and made one of the party. The unhappy young fellow to all appearance was light-hearted, happy, and content; he jested, he was the Lucien de Rubempré of his days of splendor, he would not seem to need help from anyone. He dwelt on his services to the Royalist party, and cited the hue and cry raised after him by the Liberal press as a proof of his zeal.

"And you will be well rewarded, my friend," said Mme. de Bargeton, with a gracious smile. "Go to the Chancellerie the day after to-morrow with 'the Heron' and des Lupeaulx, and you will find your patent signed by his Majesty. The Keeper of the Seals will take it to-morrow to the Tuileries, but there is to be a meeting of the Council, and he will not come back till late. Still, if I hear the result to-morrow evening, I will let you know. Where are you living?"

"I will come to you," said Lucien, ashamed to confess that he was living in the Rue de la Lune.

"The Duc de Lenoncourt and the Duc de Navarreins have made mention of you to the King," added the Marquise; "they praised your absolute and entire devotion, and said that some distinction ought to avenge your treatment on the Liberal press. The name and title of Rubempré, to which you have a claim through your mother, would become illustrious through you, they said. The King gave his lordship instructions that evening to prepare a patent authorizing the Sieur Lucien Chardon to bear the arms and

title of the Comtes de Rubempré, as grandson of the last Count by the mother's side. 'Let us favor the songsters' (*chardonnerets*) 'of Pindus,' said his Majesty, after reading your sonnet on the Lily, which my cousin luckily remembered to give the Duke.—'Especially when the King can work miracles, and change the song-bird into an eagle,' M. de Navarreins replied."

Lucien's expansion of feeling would have softened the heart of any woman less deeply wounded than Louise d'Espard de Nègrepelisse; but her thirst for vengeance was only increased by Lucien's graciousness. Des Lupeaulx was right; Lucien was wanting in tact. It never crossed his mind that this history of the patent was one of the mystifications at which Mme. d'Espard was an adept. Emboldened with success and the flattering distinction shown to him by Mlle. des Touches, he stayed till two o'clock in the morning for a word in private with his hostess. Lucien had learned in Royalist newspaper offices that Mlle. des Touches was the author of a play in which *La Petite Fay*, the marvel of the moment, was about to appear. As the rooms emptied, he drew Mlle. des Touches to a sofa in the boudoir, and told the story of Coralie's misfortune and his own so touchingly, that Mlle. des Touches promised to give the heroine's part to his friend.

That promise put new life into Coralie. But the next day, as they breakfasted together, Lucien opened Lousteau's newspaper, and found that unlucky anecdote of the Keeper of the Seals and his wife. The story was full of the blackest malice lurking in the most caustic wit. Louis XVIII. was brought into the story in a masterly fashion, and held up to ridicule in such a way that prosecution was impossible. Here is the substance of a fiction for which the Liberal party attempted to win credence, though they only succeeded in adding one more to the tale of their ingenious calumnies.

The King's passion for pink-scented notes and a correspondence full of madrigals and sparkling wit was declared to be the last phase of the tender passion; love had reached the Doctrinaire stage; or had passed, in other words, from the concrete to the abstract. The illustrious lady, so cruelly ridiculed under the name of Octavie by Béranger, had con-

ceived (so it was said) the gravest fears. The correspondence was languishing. The more Octavie displayed her wit, the cooler grew the royal lover. At last Octavie discovered the cause of her decline; her power was threatened by the novelty and piquancy of a correspondence between the august scribe and the wife of his Keeper of the Seals. That excellent woman was believed to be incapable of writing a note; she was simply and solely godmother to the efforts of audacious ambition. Who could be hidden behind her petticoats? Octavie decided, after making observations of her own, that the King was corresponding with his Minister.

She laid her plans. With the help of a faithful friend, she arranged that a stormy debate should detain the Minister at the Chamber; then she contrived to secure a tête-à-tête, and to convince outraged Majesty of the fraud. Louis XVIII. flew into a royal and truly Bourbon passion, but the tempest broke on Octavie's head. He would not believe her. Octavie offered immediate proof, begging the King to write a note which must be answered at once. The unlucky wife of the Keeper of the Seals sent to the Chamber for her husband; but precautions had been taken, and at that moment the Minister was on his legs addressing the Chamber. The lady racked her brains and replied to the note with such intellect as she could improvise.

"Your Chancellor will supply the rest," cried Octavie, laughing at the King's chagrin.

There was not a word of truth in the story; but it struck home to three persons—the Keeper of the Seals, his wife, and the King. It was said that des Lupeaulx had invented the tale, but Finot always kept his counsel. The article was caustic and clever, the Liberal papers and the Orleanists were delighted with it, and Lucien himself laughed, and thought of it merely as a very amusing *canard*.

He called next day for des Lupeaulx and the Baron du Châtelet. The Baron had just been to thank his lordship. The Sieur Châtelet, newly appointed Councilor Extraordinary, was now Comte du Châtelet, with a promise of the prefecture of the Charente so soon as the present prefect should have completed the term of office necessary to receive

the maximum retiring pension. The Comte *du Châtelet* (for the *du* had been inserted in the patent) drove with Lucien to the Chancellerie, and treated his companion as an equal. But for Lucien's articles, he said, his patent would not have been granted so soon; Liberal persecution had been a stepping-stone to advancement. Des Lupeaulx was waiting for them in the Secretary-General's office. That functionary started with surprise when Lucien appeared and looked at des Lupeaulx.

"What!" he exclaimed, to Lucien's utter bewilderment. "Do you dare to come here, sir? Your patent was made out, but his lordship has torn it up. Here it is!" (the Secretary-General caught up the first torn sheet that came to hand). "The Minister wished to discover the author of yesterday's atrocious article, and here is the manuscript," added the speaker, holding out the sheets of Lucien's article. "You call yourself a Royalist, sir, and you are on the staff of that detestable paper which turns the Minister's hair gray, harasses the Center, and is dragging the country headlong to ruin? You breakfast on the *Corsaire*, the *Miroir*, the *Constitutionnel*, and the *Courrier*; you dine on the *Quotidienne* and the *Réveil*, and then sup with Martainville, the worst enemy of the Government! Martainville urges the Government on to Absolutist measures; he is more likely to bring on another Revolution than if he had gone over to the extreme Left. You are a very clever journalist, but you will never make a politician. The Minister denounced you to the King, and the King was so angry that he scolded M. le Duc de Navarreins, his first Gentleman of the Bedchamber. Your enemies will be all the more formidable because they have hitherto been your friends. Conduct that one expects from an enemy is atrocious in a friend."

"Why, really, my dear fellow, are you a child?" said des Lupeaulx. "You have compromised me. Mme. d'Espard, Mme. de Bargeton, and Mme. de Montcornet, who were responsible for you, must be furious. The Duke is sure to have handed on his annoyance to the Marquise, and the Marquise will have scolded her cousin. Keep away from them and wait."

"Here comes his lordship—go!" said the Secretary-General.

Lucien went out into the Place Vendôme; he was stunned by this bludgeon blow. He walked home along the boulevards trying to think over his position. He saw himself a plaything in the hands of envy, treachery, and greed. What was he in this world of contending ambitions? A child sacrificing everything to the pursuit of pleasure and the gratification of vanity; a poet whose thoughts never went beyond the moment, a moth flitting from one bright gleaming object to another. He had no definite aim; he was the slave of circumstance—meaning well, doing ill. Conscience tortured him remorselessly. And to crown it all, he was penniless and exhausted with work and emotion. His articles could not compare with Merlin's or Nathan's work!

He walked on at random, absorbed in these thoughts. As he passed some of the reading-rooms which were already lending books as well as newspapers, a placard caught his eyes. It was an advertisement of a book with a grotesque title, but beneath the announcement he saw his name in brilliant letters—"By Lucien Chardon de Rubempré." So his book had come out, and he had heard nothing of it! All the newspapers were silent. He stood motionless before the placard, his arms hanging at his sides. He did not notice a little knot of acquaintances—Rastignac and de Marsay and some other fashionable young men; nor did he see that Michel Chrestien and Léon Giraud were coming towards him.

"Are you M. Chardon?" It was Michel who spoke, and there was that in the sound of his voice that set Lucien's heartstrings vibrating.

"Do you not know me?" he asked, turning very pale.

Michel spat in his face.

"Take that as your wages for your article against d'Arthez. If everybody would do as I do on his own or his friend's behalf, the press would be as it ought to be—a self-respecting and respected priesthood."

Lucien staggered back and caught hold of Rastignac.

"Gentlemen," he said, addressing Rastignac and de Mar-

say, "you will not refuse to act as my seconds. But first, I wish to make matters even and apology impossible."

He struck Michel a sudden, unexpected blow in the face. The rest rushed in between the Republican and Royalist, to prevent a street brawl. Rastignac dragged Lucien off to the Rue Taitbout, only a few steps away from the Boulevard de Gand; where this scene took place. It was the hour of dinner, or a crowd would have assembled at once. De Marsay came to find Lucien, and the pair insisted that he should dine with them at the Café Anglais, where they drank and made merry.

"Are you a good swordsman?" inquired de Marsay.

"I have never had a foil in my hands."

"A good shot?"

"Never fired a pistol in my life."

"Then you have luck on your side. You are a formidable antagonist to stand up to; you may kill your man," said de Marsay.

Fortunately, Lucien found Coralie in bed and asleep.

She had played without rehearsal in a one-act play, and taken her revenge. She had met with genuine applause. Her enemies had not been prepared for this step on her part, and her success had determined the manager to give her the heroine's part in Camille Maupin's play. He had discovered the cause of her apparent failure, and was indignant with Florine and Nathan. Coralie should have the protection of the management.

At five o'clock that morning, Rastignac came for Lucien.

"The name of your street, my dear fellow, is particularly appropriate for your lodgings; you are up in the sky," he said, by way of greeting. "Let us be first upon the ground on the road to Clignancourt; it is good form, and we ought to set them an example."

"Here is the programme," said de Marsay, as the cab rattled through the Faubourg Saint-Denis: "You stand up at twenty-five paces, coming nearer, till you are only fifteen apart. You have, each of you, five paces to take and three shots to fire—no more. Whatever happens, that must be the end of it. We load for your antagonist, and his seconds



load for you. The weapons were chosen by the four seconds at a gunmaker's. We helped you to a chance, I will promise you; horse-pistols are to be the weapons."

For Lucien, life had become a bad dream. He did not care whether he lived or died. The courage of suicide helped him in some sort to carry things off with a dash of bravado before the spectators. He stood in his place; he would not take a step, a piece of recklessness which the others took for deliberate calculation. They thought the poet an uncommonly cool hand. Michel Chrestien came as far as his limit; both fired twice and at the same time, for either party was considered to be equally insulted. Michel's first bullet grazed Lucien's chin; Lucien's passed ten feet above Chrestien's head. The second shot hit Lucien's coat collar, but the buckram lining fortunately saved its wearer. The third bullet struck him in the chest, and he dropped.

"Is he dead?" asked Michel Chrestien.

"No," said the surgeon, "he will pull through."

"So much the worse," answered Michel.

"Yes; so much the worse," said Lucien, as his tears fell fast.

By noon the unhappy boy lay in bed in his own room. With untold pains they had managed to remove him, but it had taken five hours to bring him to the Rue de la Lune. His condition was not dangerous, but precautions were necessary lest fever should set in and bring about troublesome complications. Coralie choked down her grief and anguish. She sat up with him at night through the anxious weeks of his illness, studying her parts by his bedside. Lucien was in danger for two long months; and often at the theater Coralie acted her frivolous rôle with one thought in her heart, "Perhaps he is dying at this moment."

Lucien owed his life to the skill and devotion of a friend whom he had grievously hurt. Bianchon had come to tend him after hearing the story of the attack from d'Arthez, who told it in confidence, and excused the unhappy poet. Bianchon suspected that d'Arthez was generously trying to screen the renegade; but on questioning Lucien during a lucid interval in the dangerous nervous fever, he learned that his

patient was only responsible for the one serious article in Hector Merlin's paper.

Before the first month was out, the firm of Fendant and Cavalier filed their schedule. Bianchon told Coralie that Lucien must on no account hear the news. The famous *Archer of Charles IX.*, brought out with an absurd title, had been a complete failure. Fendant, being anxious to realize a little ready money before going into bankruptcy, had sold the whole edition (without Cavalier's knowledge) to dealers in printed paper. These, in their turn, had disposed of it at a cheap rate to hawkers, and Lucien's book at that moment was adorning the bookstalls along the Quays. The booksellers on the Quai des Augustins, who had previously taken a quantity of copies, now discovered that after this sudden reduction of the price they were like to lose heavily on their purchases; the four duodecimo volumes, for which they had paid four francs fifty centimes, were being given away for fifty sous. Great was the outcry in the trade; but the newspapers preserved a profound silence. Barbet had not foreseen this "clearance"; he had a belief in Lucien's abilities; for once he had broken his rule and taken two hundred copies. The prospect of a loss drove him frantic; the things he said of Lucien were fearful to hear. Then Barbet took a heroic resolution. He stocked his copies in a corner of his shop, with the obstinacy of greed, and left his competitors to sell their wares at a loss. Two years afterwards, when d'Arthez's fine preface, the merits of the book, and one or two articles by Léon Giraud had raised the value of the book, Barbet sold his copies, one by one, at ten francs each.

Lucien knew nothing of all this, but Bérénice and Coralie could not refuse to allow Hector Merlin to see his dying comrade, and Hector Merlin made him drink, drop by drop, the whole of the bitter draught brewed by the failure of Fendant and Cavalier, made bankrupts by his first ill-fated book. Martainville, the one friend who stood by Lucien through thick and thin, had written a magnificent article on his work; but so great was the general exasperation against the editor of *L'Aristarque*, *L'Oriflamme*, and *Le Drapeau*

*Blanc*, that his championship only injured Lucien. In vain did the athlete return the Liberal insults tenfold, not a newspaper took up the challenge in spite of all his attacks.

Coralie, Bérénice, and Bianchon might shut the door on Lucien's so-called friends, who raised a great outcry, but it was impossible to keep out creditors and writs. After the failure of Fendant and Cavalier, their bills were taken into the bankruptcy according to that provision of the Code of Commerce most inimical to the claims of third parties, who in this way lose the benefit of delay.

Lucien discovered that Camusot was proceeding against him with great energy. When Coralie heard the name, and for the first time learned the dreadful and humiliating step which her poet had taken for her sake, the angelic creature loved him ten times more than before, and would not approach Camusot. The bailiff bringing the warrant of arrest shrank from the idea of dragging his prisoner out of bed, and went back to Camusot before applying to the President of the Tribunal of Commerce for an order to remove the debtor to a private hospital. Camusot hurried at once to the Rue de la Lune, and Coralie went down to him.

When she came up again she held the warrants, in which Lucien was described as a tradesman, in her hand. How had she obtained those papers from Camusot? What promise had she given? Coralie kept a sad, gloomy silence, but when she returned she looked as if all the life had gone out of her. She played in Camille Maupin's play, and contributed not a little to the success of that illustrious literary hermaphrodite; but the creation of this character was the last flicker of a bright, dying lamp. On the twentieth night, when Lucien had so far recovered that he had regained his appetite and could walk abroad, and talked of getting to work again, Coralie broke down; a secret trouble was weighing upon her. Bérénice always believed that she had promised to go back to Camusot to save Lucien.

Another mortification followed. Coralie was obliged to see her part given to Florine. Nathan had threatened the Gymnase with war if the management refused to give the vacant place to Coralie's rival. Coralie had persisted till

she could play no longer, knowing that Florine was waiting to step into her place. She had overtasked her strength. The Gymnase had advanced sums during Lucien's illness, she had no money to draw; Lucien, eager to work though he was, was not yet strong enough to write, and he helped besides to nurse Coralie and to relieve Bérénice. From poverty they had come to utter distress; but in Bianchon they found a skillful and devoted doctor, who obtained credit for them of the druggist. The landlord of the house and the tradespeople knew by this time how matters stood. The furniture was attached. The tailor and dressmaker no longer stood in awe of the journalist, and proceeded to extremes; and at last no one, with the exception of the pork-butcher and the druggist, gave the two unlucky children credit. For a week or more all three of them—Lucien, Bérénice, and the invalid—were obliged to live on the various ingenious preparations sold by the pork-butcher; the inflammatory diet was little suited to the sick girl, and Coralie grew worse. Sheer want compelled Lucien to ask Lousteau for a return of the loan of a thousand francs lost at play by the friend who had deserted him in his hour of need. Perhaps, amid all his troubles, this step cost him most cruel suffering.

Lousteau was not to be found in the Rue de la Harpe. Hunted down like a hare, he was lodging now with this friend, now with that. Lucien found him at last at Flicoteaux's; he was sitting at the very table at which Lucien had found him that evening when, for his misfortune, he forsook d'Arthez for journalism. Lousteau offered him dinner, and Lucien accepted the offer.

As they came out of Flicoteaux's with Claude Vignon (who happened to be dining there that day) and the great man in obscurity, who kept his wardrobe at Samanon's, the four among them could not produce enough specie to pay for a cup of coffee at the Café Voltaire. They lounged about the Luxembourg in the hope of meeting with a publisher; and, as it fell out, they met with one of the most famous printers of the day. Lousteau borrowed forty francs of him, and divided the money into four equal parts.

Misery had brought down Lucien's pride and extinguished sentiment; he shed tears as he told the story of his troubles, but each one of his comrades had a tale as cruel as his own; and when the three versions had been given, it seemed to the poet that he was the least unfortunate among the four. All of them craved a respite from remembrance and thoughts which made trouble doubly hard to bear.

Lousteau hurried to the Palais Royal to gamble with his remaining nine francs. The great man unknown to fame, though he had a divine mistress, must needs hie him to a low haunt of vice to wallow in perilous pleasure. Vignon betook himself to the Rocher de Cancale to drown memory and thought in a couple of bottles of Bordeaux; Lucien parted company with him on the threshold, declining to share that supper. When he shook hands with the one journalist who had not been hostile to him, it was with a cruel pang in his heart.

"What shall I do?" he asked aloud.

"One must do as one can," the great critic said. "Your book is good, but it excited jealousy, and your struggle will be hard and long. Genius is a cruel disease. Every writer carries a canker in his heart, a devouring monster, like the tapeworm in the stomach, which destroys all feeling as it arises in him. Which is the stronger? The man or the disease? One had need be a great man, truly, to keep the balance between genius and character. The talent grows, the heart withers. Unless a man is a giant, unless he has the thews of a Hercules, he must be content either to lose his gift or to live without a heart. You are slender and fragile, you will give way," he added, as he turned into the restaurant.

Lucien returned home, thinking over that terrible verdict. He beheld the life of literature by the light of the profound truths uttered by Vignon.

"Money! money!" a voice cried in his ears.

Then he drew three bills of a thousand francs each, due respectively in one, two, and three months, imitating the handwriting of his brother-in-law, David Séchard, with admirable skill. He indorsed the bills, and took them next

morning to Métivier, the paper-dealer in the Rue Serpente, who made no difficulty about taking them. Lucien wrote a few lines to give his brother-in-law notice of this assault upon his cash-box, promising, as usual in such cases, to be ready to meet the bills as they fell due.

When all debts, his own and Coralie's, were paid, he put the three hundred francs which remained into Bérénice's hands, bidding her to refuse him money if he asked for it. He was afraid of a return of the gambler's frenzy. Lucien worked away gloomily in a sort of cold, speechless fury, putting forth all his powers into witty articles, written by the light of the lamp at Coralie's bedside. Whenever he looked up in search of ideas, his eyes fell on that beloved face, white as porcelain, fair with the beauty that belongs to the dying, and he saw a smile on her pale lips, and her eyes, grown bright with a more consuming pain than physical suffering, always turned on his face.

Lucien sent in his work, but he could not leave the house to worry editors, and his articles did not appear. When he at last made up his mind to go to the office, he met with a cool reception from Théodore Gaillard, who had advanced him money, and turned his literary diamonds to good account afterwards.

"Take care, my dear fellow, you are falling off," he said. "You must not let yourself down, your work wants inspiration!"

"That little Lucien has written himself out with his romance and his first articles," cried Félicien Vernou, Merlin, and the whole chorus of his enemies, whenever his name came up at Dauriat's or the Vaudeville. "The work he is sending us is pitiable."

"To have written one's self out" (in the slang of journalism), is a verdict very hard to live down. It passed everywhere from mouth to mouth, ruining Lucien, all unsuspecting as he was. And, indeed, his burdens were too heavy for his strength. In the midst of a heavy strain of work, he was sued for the bills which he had drawn in David Séchard's name. He had recourse to Camusot's experience, and Coralie's sometime adorer was generous enough to assist the man

she loved. The intolerable situation lasted for two whole months; the days being diversified by stamped papers in abundance, which Lucien (acting on Camusot's advice) handed over to Desroches, a friend of Bixiou, Blondet, and des Lupeaulx.

Early in August, Bianchon told them that Coralie's condition was hopeless—she had only a few days to live. Those days were spent in tears by Bérénice and Lucien; they could not hide their grief from the dying girl, and she was broken-hearted for Lucien's sake.

Some strange change was working in Coralie. She would have Lucien bring a priest; she must be reconciled to the Church and die in peace. Coralie died as a Christian; her repentance was sincere. Her agony and death took all energy and heart out of Lucien. He sank into a low chair at the foot of the bed, and never took his eyes off her till Death brought the end of her suffering. It was five o'clock in the morning. Some singing-bird, lighting upon a flower-pot on the window-sill, twittered a few notes. Bérénice, kneeling by the bedside, was covering a hand fast growing cold with kisses and tears. On the chimney-piece there lay eleven sous.

Lucien went out. Despair bade him beg for money to lay Coralie in her grave. He had wild thoughts of flinging himself at the Marquise d'Espard's feet, of entreating the Comte du Châtelet, Mme. de Bargeton, Mlle. des Touches, nay, that terrible dandy of a de Marsay. All his pride had gone with his strength. He would have enlisted as a common soldier at that moment for money. He walked on with the slouching, feverish gait known to all the unhappy, reached Camille Maupin's house, entered, careless of his disordered dress, and sent in a message. He entreated Mlle. des Touches to see him for a moment.

"Mademoiselle only went to bed at three o'clock this morning," said the servant, "and no one would dare to disturb her until she rings."

"When does she ring?"

"Never before ten o'clock."

Then Lucien wrote one of those harrowing appeals in

which the well-dressed beggar flings all pride and self-respect to the winds. One evening, not so very long ago, when Lousteau had told him of the abject begging letters which Finot received, Lucien had thought it impossible that any creature should sink so low; and now, carried away by his pen, he had gone further, it may be, than other unlucky wretches upon the same road. He did not suspect, in his fever and imbecility, that he had just written a masterpiece of pathos. On his way home along the boulevards, he met Barbet.

"Barbet!" he begged, holding out his hand. "Five hundred francs!"

"No. Two hundred," returned the other.

"Ah! then you have a heart."

"Yes; but I am a man of business as well. I have lost a lot of money through you," he concluded, after giving the history of the failure of Fendant and Cavalier, "will you put me in the way of making some?"

Lucien quivered.

"You are a poet. You ought to understand all kinds of poetry," continued the little publisher. "I want a few rollicking songs at this moment to put along with some more by different authors, or they will be down upon me over the copyright. I want to have a good collection to sell on the streets at ten sous. If you care to let me have ten good drinking songs by to-morrow morning, or something spicy, you know the sort of thing, eh? I will pay you two hundred francs."

When Lucien returned home, he found Coralie stretched out straight and stiff on a pallet-bed; Bérénice, with many tears, had wrapped her in a coarse linen sheet, and put lighted candles at the four corners of the bed. Coralie's face had taken that strange, delicate beauty of death which so vividly impresses the living with the idea of absolute calm; she looked like some white girl in a decline; it seemed as if those pale, crimson lips must open and murmur the name which had blended with the name of God in the last words that she uttered before she died.

Lucien told Bérénice to order a funeral which should not



cost more than two hundred francs, including the service at the shabby little church of the Bonne-Nouvelle. As soon as she had gone out, he sat down to a table, and beside the dead body of his love he composed the ten rollicking songs to fit popular airs. The effort cost him untold anguish, but at last the brain began to work at the bidding of Necessity, as if suffering were not; and already Lucien had learned to put Claude Vignon's terrible maxims in practice, and to raise a barrier between heart and brain. What a night the poor boy spent over those drinking songs, writing by the light of the tall wax candles while the priest recited the prayers for the dead!

Morning broke before the last song was finished. Lucien tried it over to a street song of the day, to the consternation of Bérénice and the priest, who thought that he was mad:

Lads, 'tis tedious waste of time  
To mingle song and reason;  
Folly calls for laughing rhyme,  
Sense is out of season.  
Let Apollo be forgot  
When Bacchus fills the drinking-cup;  
Any catch is good, I wot,  
If good fellows take it up.  
Let philosophers protest.  
Let us laugh,  
And quaff,  
And a fig for the rest!

As Hippocrates has said,  
Every jolly fellow,  
When a century has sped,  
Still is fit and mellow.  
No more following of a lass  
With the palsy in your legs?—  
While your hand can hold a glass,  
You can drain it to the dregs,  
With an undiminished zest.  
Let us laugh,  
And quaff,  
And a fig for the rest!

Whence we come we know full well.  
Whither are we going?  
Ne'er a one of us can tell,  
'Tis a thing past knowing.

Faith! what does it signify,  
 Take the good that Heaven sends;  
 It is certain that we die,  
 Certain that we live, my friends.  
 Life is nothing but a jest.  
 Let us laugh,  
 And quaff,  
 And a fig for the rest!

He was shouting the reckless refrain when d'Arthez and Bianchon arrived, to find him in a paroxysm of despair and exhaustion, utterly unable to make a fair copy of his verses. A torrent of tears followed; and when, amid his sobs, he had told his story, he saw the tears standing in his friends' eyes.

"This wipes out many sins," said d'Arthez.

"Happy are they who suffer for their sins in this world," the priest said solemnly.

At the sight of the fair, dead face smiling at Eternity, while Coralie's lover wrote tavern-catches to buy a grave for her, and Barbet paid for the coffin—of the four candles lighted about the dead body of her who had thrilled a great audience as she stood behind the footlights in her Spanish *basquina* and scarlet green-clocked stockings; while beyond, in the doorway, stood the priest who had reconciled the dying actress with God, now about to return to the church to say a mass for the soul of her who had "loved much,"—all the grandeur and the sordid aspects of the scene, all that sorrow crushed under by Necessity, froze the blood of the great writer and the great doctor. They sat down; neither of them could utter a word.

Just at that moment a servant in livery announced Mlle. des Touches. That beautiful and noble woman understood everything at once. She stepped quickly across the room to Lucien, and slipped two thousand-franc notes into his hand as she grasped it.

"It is too late," he said, looking up at her with dull, hopeless eyes.

The three stayed with Lucien, trying to soothe his despair with comforting words; but every spring seemed to be broken. At noon all the brotherhood, with the exception of Michel

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Chrestien (who, however, had learned the truth as to Lucien's treachery), was assembled in the poor little church of the Bonne-Nouvelle; Mlle. des Touches was present, and Bérénice and Coralie's dresser from the theater, with a couple of supernumeraries and the disconsolate Camusot. All the men accompanied the actress to her last resting-place in Père Lachaisè. Camusot, shedding hot tears, had solemnly promised Lucien to buy the grave in perpetuity, and to put a headstone above it with the words:

CORALIE

AGED NINETEEN YEARS

August, 1822.

Lucien stayed there, on the sloping ground that looks out over Paris, until the sun had set.

"Who will love me now?" he thought. "My truest friends despise me. Whatever I might have done, she who lies here would have thought me wholly noble and good. I have no one left to me now but my sister and mother and David. And what do they think of me at home?"

Poor distinguished provincial! He went back to the Rue de la Lune; but the sight of the rooms was so acutely painful, that he could not stay in them, and he took a cheap lodging elsewhere in the same street. Mlle. des Touches's two thousand francs and the sale of the furniture paid the debts.

Bérénice had two hundred francs left, on which they lived for two months. Lucien was prostrate; he could neither write nor think; he gave way to morbid grief. Bérénice took pity upon him.

"Suppose that you were to go back to your own country, how are you to get there?" she asked one day, by way of reply to an exclamation of Lucien's.

"On foot."

"But even so, you must live and sleep on the way. Even if you walk twelve leagues a day, you will want twenty francs at least."

"I will get them together," he said.

He took his clothes and his best linen, keeping nothing but strict necessities, and went to Samanon, who offered fifty francs for his entire wardrobe. In vain he begged the money-lender to let him have enough to pay his fare by the coach; Samanon was inexorable. In a paroxysm of fury, Lucien rushed to Frascati's, staked the proceeds of the sale, and lost every farthing. Back once more in the wretched room in the Rue de la Lune, he asked Bérénice for Coralie's shawl. The good girl looked at him, and knew in a moment what he meant to do. He had confessed to his loss at the gaming-table; and now he was going to hang himself.

"Are you mad, sir? Go out for a walk, and come back again at midnight. I will get the money for you; but keep to the boulevards, do not go towards the Quais."

Lucien paced up and down the boulevards. He was stupid with grief. He watched the passers-by and the stream of traffic, and felt that he was alone, and a very small atom in this seething whirlpool of Paris, churned by the strife of innumerable interests. His thoughts went back to the banks of his Charente; a craving for happiness and home awoke in him; and with the craving came one of the sudden febrile bursts of energy which half-feminine natures like his mistake for strength. He would not give up until he had poured out his heart to David Séchard, and taken counsel of the three good angels still left to him on earth.

As he lounged along, he caught sight of Bérénice—Bérénice in her Sunday clothes, speaking to a stranger at the corner of the Rue de la Lune and the filthy Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, where she had taken her stand.

"What are you doing?" asked Lucien, dismayed by a sudden suspicion.

"Here are your twenty francs," said the girl, slipping four five-franc pieces into the poet's hand. "They may cost dear yet; but you can go," and she had fled before Lucien could see the way she went; for, in justice to him, it must be said that the money burned his hand, he wanted to return it, but he was forced to keep it as the final brand set upon him by life in Paris.



# **THE LILY OF THE VALLEY**



## PREFACE

*Le Lys dans la Vallée* has considerable importance in the history of Balzac's books, and not a little in that of his life, independently of its intrinsic merit. It brought on a lawsuit between him and the *Revue de Paris*, in which the greater part of it was published, and in which he refused to complete it. As the actual suit was decided in his favor, his legal justification is not matter of dispute, and his adversaries put themselves hopelessly in the wrong by reviewing the termination of the book, when it appeared elsewhere, in a strain of virulent but clumsy ridicule. As to where the right or wrong lay, independent of questions of pure law on one side and pure taste on the other, it is not so easy to come to any conclusion. Balzac published an elaborate justification of his own conduct, which does not now appear with the book, but may be found, by anyone who is curious, among the rejected prefaces which fill a large part of the twenty-second volume (the third of the *Œuvres Diverses*) of his *Works*. It is exceedingly long, not by any means temperate, and so confused that it is difficult to make head or tail of it. What is clear is that the parties went on the dangerous and unsatisfactory plan of neither complete performance of the work before payment nor complete payment beforehand, but of a *per contra* account, the author drawing money as he wanted it, and sending in copy as he could or chose. Balzac seems to allow that he got into arrears, contending that if he paid those arrears the rest of the work was his own property. But there were complicating disagreements in reference to a simultaneous publication at St. Petersburg; and, on the whole, we may fairly conclude in the not very original terms of "faults on both sides." The affair, however, evidently gave him much annoyance, and seems to have brought him into some discredit.

The other point of personal interest is that Mme. de Mortsauf is very generally said to represent Mme. de Berny,



his early friend, and his first instructress in aristocratic ways. Although there are strong expressions of affection in his letters with regard to this lady, who died early in his career, they do not definitely indicate what is commonly called love. But the whole scenery and atmosphere of *Le Lys dans la Vallée* are those of his own early haunts. Frapesle, which is so often mentioned, was the home of another platonic friend, Mme. Zulma Carraud, and there is much in the early experiences of Félix de Vandenesse which has nearly as personal a touch as that of *Louis Lambert* itself.

Dismissing this, we may come to the book itself. Balzac took so much interest in it—indeed, the personal throb may be felt throughout—that he departed (according to his own account, for the second time only) from his rule of not answering criticism. This was in regard to a very remarkable article of M. Hippolyte Castillès (to be found in M. de Lovenjoul's invaluable bibliography, as is the answering letter in the *Œuvres Diverses*), reflecting upon the rather pagan and materialist "resurrection of the flesh" in Mme. de Mortsauf on her deathbed. His plea that it was the disease, not the person, though possessing a good deal of physiological force, is psychologically rather weak, and might have been made much stronger. Indeed this scene, though shocking and disconcerting to weak brethren, is not merely the strongest in the novel, but one of the strongest in Balzac's works. There is farther to be noted in the book a quaint delineation, in the personage of M. de Mortsauf, of a kind of conjugal torment which, as a rule, is rather borne by husbands at the hands of wives than *vice versa*. The behavior of the "lily's" husband, sudden rages and all, is exactly that of a shrewish and valetudinarian woman.

This, however, and some minor matters, may be left to the reader to find out and appreciate. The most interesting point, and the most debatable, is the character of the heroine with, in a lesser degree, that of the hero. Of M. Félix de Vandenesse it is not necessary to say very much, because that capital letter from Mme. de Manerville (one of the very best things that Balzac ever wrote, and exhibiting a

sharpness and precision of mere writing which he too frequently lacked) does fair, though not complete, justice on the young man. The lady, who was not a model of excellence herself, perhaps did not perceive—for it does not seem to have been in her nature to conceal it through kindness—that he was not only, as she tells him, wanting in tact, but also wanting, and that execrably, in taste. M. de Vandenesse, I think, ranks in Balzac's list of good heroes; at any rate he saves him later from a fate which he rather richly deserved, and introduces him honorably in other places. But he was not a nice young man. His "pawing" and timid advances on Mme. de Mortsauf, and his effusive "kissing and telling" in reference to Lady Dudley, both smack of the worst sides of Rousseau: they deserve not so much moral reprehension as physical kicking. It is no wonder that Madeleine de Mortsauf turned a cold shoulder on him; and it is an addition to his demerits that he seems to have thought her unjust in doing so.

As for the "lily" we come once more to one of those ineradicable differences between French and English taste—one of those moral fosses not to be filled which answer to the physical Channel. I have said that I do not think the last scene unnatural, or even repulsive: it is pretty true, and rather terrible, and where truth and terror are there is seldom disgust. But, elsewhere, for all her technical purity, her shudderings, and the rest of it, I cannot help thinking that, without insular narrowness or prudery, one may find Mme. de Mortsauf a little rancid, a little like stale cold cream of roses. And if it is insular narrowness and prudery so to find her, let us thank God for a narrowness which yet leaves room for Cleopatra, for Beatrix Esmond, and for Becky Sharp. I should myself have thought Mme. de Mortsauf a person of bad taste in caring at all for such a creature as Félix. But if she did care, I should have thought better of her for pitching her cap over the very highest mill in her care for him, than for this fulsome hankering, this "I would, but dare not" platonism. Still, others may think differently, and that the book is a very powerful book they cannot hold more distinctly than I do.

Some bibliographical details about *Le Lys* have been anticipated above. It need only be added that the appearances in the *Revue de Paris* were in the numbers for November and December 1835, and that the book was published by Werdet in June of next year. The date of the *Envoi* (afterwards removed), August 8, 1827, may have some biographical interest. Charpentier republished the book in a slightly different form in 1839, and, five years later, it was installed in the *Comédie*.

G. S.

*Note.*—It may be barely necessary for me to protect myself and the translator from a possible charge of mistaking *Lilium candidum* for *Convallaria majalis*. The French for our "lily-of-the-valley" is, of course, *muguet*. But "Lily in the Valley" would inevitably sound in England like a worse mistake, or a tasteless variation on a consecrated phrase. And "Lily of the Valley" meets the real sense well.

## THE LILY OF THE VALLEY

*To Monsieur J. B. Nacquart.  
Member of the Royal Academy of Medicine.*

*Dear Doctor,—Here is one of the most highly wrought stones of the second story of a literary edifice that is being slowly and laboriously constructed; I wish to set your name here, as much to thank the physician who once saved my life as to do honor to the friend of every day.*

*De Balzac.*

*To Mme. la Comtesse Natalie de Manerville.*

“**I** YIELD to your wish. It is the privilege of the woman whom we love more than she loves us that she can at any moment make us forget the laws of good sense. To spare ourselves the sight of a wrinkle on your brow, to dissipate a pout on your lips—which so small a contradiction saddens—we work miracles to annihilate distance, we give our blood, we mortgage the future.

“You, to-day, want my past: here it is. But understand this, Natalie; to obey you I have had to trample under foot a repugnance I never before have conquered. Why must you be suspicious of the long and sudden reveries which come over me when I am happiest? Why show the pretty tempers of a woman beloved because I fall silent? Could you not play with the contrasts of my nature without knowing their causes? Have you in your heart secrets which must have mine to gain absolution?

“Well, you have guessed rightly, Natalie, and it is better perhaps that you should know everything: yes, my life is overshadowed by a phantom; it asserts itself vaguely at the least word that evokes it; it often hovers over me unbidden. I have, buried within my soul, astounding memories,

like those marine growths which may be seen in calm waters, and which the surges of the storm fling in fragments on the shore.

“Though the travail needed for the utterance of ideas has controlled the old emotions which hurt me so much when they are suddenly aroused, if there should be in this confession any outbreaks that offend you, remember that you threatened me in case of disobedience, and do not punish me for having obliged you.

“I only wish my confidence might increase your tenderness twofold.

“Till this evening.

FELIX.”

To what genius fed on tears may we some day owe the most touching elegy—the picture of the tortures suffered in silence by souls whose roots, while still tender, find nothing but hard pebbles in the soil of home, whose earliest blossoms are rent by the hands of hate, whose flowers are frost-bitten as soon as they open? What poet will tell of the sorrows of the child whose lips suck the milk of bitterness, whose smiles are checked by the scorching fire of a stern eye? The fiction that should depict these poor crushed hearts, down-trodden by those who are placed about them to encourage the development of their feelings, would be the true story of my childhood.

What vanities could I, a newborn babe, have fretted? What moral or physical deformity earned me my mother's coldness? Was I the offspring of duty, a child whose birth is fortuitous, or one whose existence is a standing reproach?

Sent to be nursed in the country and forgotten by my parents for three years, when I returned to my father's house I counted for so little that I had to endure the pity of the servants. I know not to what feeling nor to what happy chance I owed it that I was able to rally after this first disaster; as a child I did not understand, and as a man I do not know. My brother and my two sisters, far from mitigating my fate, amused themselves by tormenting me. The mutual compact, in virtue of which children hide each other's peccadilloes and learn an infant code of honor, was

null and void as regarded me; nay more, I often found myself in disgrace for my brother's misdeeds, with no power of appeal against the injustice; was it that insidious self-interest, of which a germ exists even in children, prompted them to add to the persecution that weighed on me, so as to win the good graces of the mother whom they feared no less? Was it the result of their imitative instinct? Was it a desire to try their power, or a lack of fellow-feeling? All these causes combined perhaps to deprive me of the comfort of brotherly kindness. Cut off already from all affection, I could love nothing, and Nature had made me loving! Is there an angel who collects the sighs of such ever-repressed feeling? If misprized sentiments turn to hatred in some souls, in mine they became concentrated, and wore a channel from whence at a later date they gushed into my life. In some characters the habit of shrinking relaxes every fiber, and gives rise to fear; and fear reduces us to perpetual subjection. Hence proceeds a weakness which debases a man and gives him an indescribable taint of servility.

But this constant torment gave me the habit of exerting a force which increased with exercise, and predisposed my soul to moral fortitude. Always on the lookout for some new misery, as martyrs expect a fresh blow, my whole being must have expressed a gloomy dejection which stifled all the graces and impulses of childhood, a condition which was regarded as a symptom of idiocy, justifying my mother's ominous prognostics. A sense of this injustice gave rise in my spirit to a premature feeling of pride, the outcome of reason, which, no doubt, was a check on the evil disposition fostered by such a manner of education.

Though completely neglected by my mother, I was occasionally the cause of some scruples in her mind; she sometimes talked of my learning something, and expressed a purpose of teaching me; then I shuddered miserably at the thought of the anguish of daily contact with her. I blessed my deserted loneliness, and was happy in being left in the garden to play with pebbles, watch the insects, and gaze at the blue sky.

Though isolation made me dreamy, my love of meditation

had its rise in an incident which will give you an idea of my first woes. I was so entirely overlooked that the governess often forgot to put me to bed. One evening, peacefully sitting under a fig-tree, I was looking at a star with the passionate curiosity known to children, to which, in me, precocious melancholy gave a sort of sentimental intuition. My sisters were playing and shouting; I heard the remote clatter like an accompaniment to my thoughts. The noise presently ceased; night fell. By chance my mother noticed my absence. To avert a scolding, our governess, a certain terrible Mlle. Caroline, justified my mother's affected fears by declaring that I had a horror of home; that if she had not watched me narrowly, I should have run away before then; that I was not weak of intellect, but sly; that of all the children she had ever had care of, she had never known one whose disposition was so vile as mine.

She then pretended to search for me, and called me; I replied; she came to the fig-tree where she knew that I was.

"What have you been doing here?" she asked.

"I was looking at a star."

"You were not looking at a star," cried my mother, who was listening from her balcony, "as if a child of your age could know anything of astronomy!"

"Oh, madame," cried Mlle. Caroline, "he turned on the tap of the cistern, the garden is flooded!"

There was a great commotion. My sisters had amused themselves with turning the tap to see the water flow; but, startled by a spurt sideways that had wetted them all over, they lost their head, and fled without turning the water off again. Accused and convicted of having devised this piece of mischief, and of lying when I asserted my innocence, I was severely punished. But, worst of all, I was mocked at for my love of star-gazing, and my mother forbade my staying in the garden in the evening.

Tyrannical prohibitions give zest to a passion, even more in children than in men; children have the advantage of thinking of nothing else but the forbidden thing, which then becomes irresistibly fascinating. So I was often caned for my star. Unable to confide my woes to any human being,

I told my griefs to the star in that exquisite internal warbling by which a child lisps its first ideas as he has already lisped his first words. At the age of twelve, a boy at school, I, still contemplated it with a sense of unspeakable rapture, so deep are the marks set on the heart by the impressions received in the dawn of life.

My brother Charles, five years my senior, was not less handsome as a child than he is as a man; he was my father's favorite, my mother's darling, the hope of the family, and consequently the king of the household. Well made and strong, he had a tutor. I, frail and sickly, was sent, at the age of five, to a day-school in the town, whither I was taken in the morning by my father's valet, who fetched me home in the afternoon. I took my midday meal in a basket but scantily filled, while my comrades brought ample supplies. This contrast of my necessity with their abundance was the source of much suffering. The famous *rillettes* and *rillons* of Tours (a kind of sausage meat) formed the larger part of our midday luncheon, between breakfast in the morning and late dinner at the hour of our return home. This preparation, highly prized by some epicures, is rarely seen at Tours on any genteel table; though I may have heard of it before going to school, I had never been so happy as to see the brown confection spread on a slice of bread for my own eating; but even if it had not been a fashionable dainty at school, my longing for it would have been no less eager, for it had become a fixed idea in my brain, just as the stews concocted by her porter's wife inspired a longing in one of the most elegant of Paris duchesses, who, being a woman, gratified her fancy.

Children can read such a longing in each other's eyes just as you can read love: thenceforth I was a standing laughing-stock. My school-fellows, almost all of the shopkeeper class, would come to display their excellent *rillettes*, and ask me if I knew how they were made, where they were sold, and why I had none. They would smack their lips as they praised their *rillons*, fragments of pork fried in their own fat and looking like boiled truffles; they took stock of my basket, and finding only Olivet cheeses or dried fruit, struck me



dumb by saying, "Why, you have nothing at all!" in a way that taught me to estimate the difference made between my brother and myself.

This comparison of my own misery with the good fortune of others dashed the roses of my childhood and blighted my blossoming youth. The first time that I, taken in by a semblance of generosity, put out my hand to take the longed-for treat from a hypocrite who offered it, the boy snatched it away, raising a shout of laughter among the others who were aware of the practical joke.

If the loftiest minds are accessible to vanity, we may surely pardon a child for crying when he finds himself despised and made game of. Treated thus, most children would become greedy, sneaking, and mean. To avoid persecution, I fought my foes; the courage of despair made me formidable, but I was detested, and remained without defense against treachery. One evening, as I left school, a handkerchief, tightly rolled and full of stones, struck me on the back. When the valet, who avenged me amply, told my mother about it, she only said—

"That dreadful child will never be anything but a trouble to us!"

I then suffered the most miserable distrust of myself, discerning at school the same repulsion as was felt for me by my family. I was thrown in on myself at school and at home. A second fall of snow checked the blossoming of the germs sown in my soul. Those who were loved were, I saw, sturdy rascals; with this I comforted my pride, and I dwelt alone. Thus there was no end to the impossibility of pouring out the feelings which swelled my poor little heart. Seeing me always alone, hated and dejected, the master confirmed my parents' unjust notions as to my evil nature.

As soon as I could read and write, my mother had me exiled to Pont-le-Voy, a school managed by Oratorians, who received children of my age into a class designated as that of the *Pas Latins* (Latin steps), which also included scholars whose defective intelligence had precluded the rudiments. There I remained for eight years, seeing no one, and leading

the life of a pariah. And this was why. I had but three francs a month for pocket-money, a sum which barely sufficed for the pens, knives, rulers, ink, and paper with which we had to provide ourselves. And so, being unable to buy stilts, or ropes, or any of the things needed for schoolboy amusements, I was banished from every game; to gain admittance I must either have toadied the rich or have flattered the strong boys in my division. Now the least idea of such meanness, which children so often drift into, raised my gorge.

I used to sit under a tree reading the books given out to us once a month by the librarian. How much anguish lay hidden in the depths of this unnatural isolation, what misery this desertion caused me! Imagine what my tender soul must have felt when, at the first distribution of prizes, I was awarded the two most anxiously looked for—that for composition and that for translation! When I went up to the platform to receive them, in the midst of applause and cheers, I had neither father nor mother to rejoice with me, while the room was full of my comrades' parents. Instead of kissing the visitor who distributed the prizes, as was usual, I threw myself on his breast and melted into tears. In the evening I burnt my laurel crowns in the stove. The other boys' parents stayed in the town during the week of examinations preceding the prize-giving, so that my schoolfellows went off next morning in high glee; while I, whose parents were only a few leagues away, remained at school with the "*Outre-mers*," a name given to boys whose families lived in the islands or abroad. In the evening, while prayers were read, the barbarous little wretches would boast of the good dinners they had had at home.

You will see that my misfortunes went on growing in proportion to the circumference of the social spheres in which I moved. How many efforts have I not made to invalidate the sentence which condemned me to live in myself alone! How many hopes long cherished, with a thousand soul-felt aspirations, have been destroyed in a single day! To induce my parents to come to the school, I wrote them letters full of feeling, rather emphatically worded perhaps—

but should these letters have drawn down on me my mother's reproaches and ironical comments on my style? Still, not discouraged, I promised to do all my parents insisted on as the conditions of a visit; I implored my sisters' aid, writing to them on their name-days and birthdays with the punctuality of a hapless, deserted child—but with vain persistency.

As the day for prize-giving approached, I made my entreaties more urgent, and wrote of my hopes of success. Deceived by my parents' silence, I expected them with exultant hopes, telling my schoolfellows that they were coming; and when, as family parties began to arrive, the old porter's step echoed along the passages, I felt sick with anticipation. But the old man never uttered my name.

One day when I confessed that I had cursed my existence, the priest spoke to me of Heaven, where the palm branch grows that the Saviour promised to the *Beati qui lugent*. So in preparing for my first communion, I threw myself into the mystic gulf of prayer, bewitched by religious notions, whose spiritual fairy dreams enchant the youthful mind. Fired with eager faith, I besought God to renew in my favor the fascinating miracles of which I read in the history of martyrs. At five I had gone forth to a star; at twelve I was knocking at the door of the sanctuary. My ecstasy gave rise to unutterable dreams which supplied my imagination, gave fervor to my tenderness, and strengthened my thinking powers. I often ascribed these sublime visions to angels charged with fashioning my soul to divine ends, and they gave my eyes the power of seeing the inmost soul of things; they prepared my heart for the magic which makes the poet wretched when he has the fatal power of comparing what he feels with what exists, the great things he craves after with what he obtains; they wrote in my brain a book in which I have read what I was required to express; they touched my lips with the fire of the *improvisatore*.

My father having conceived some doubts as to the tendency of the Oratorian teaching, came to fetch me from Pont-le-Voy, and placed me in a boarding-house for boys in Paris, situated in the Marais. I was now fifteen. On examination as to my acquirements, the pupil from Pont-le-Voy was judged

capable of entering the third class. The miseries I had endured at home, at day-school, and at Pont-le-Voy were renewed under a new aspect during my life at the pension Lepître. My father gave me no money. When my parents had ascertained that I could be fed, clothed, crammed with Latin, and stuffed with Greek, that was enough. In the whole course of my career at school and college, I have known perhaps a thousand fellow-students, and I never heard of a case of such utter indifference.

M. Lepître, a fanatical adherent of the Bourbons, had been thrown in my father's way at the time when some devoted Royalists tried to rescue Queen Marie Antoinette from the Temple; they had since renewed their acquaintance. Hence M. Lepître conceived it his duty to remedy my father's oversight; but the sum he allowed me monthly was small, for he did not know what my parents' intentions might be.

M. Lepître occupied a fine old house, the Hôtel Joyeuse, where, as in all the ancient residences of the nobility, there was a lodge for a gate-porter. During the hour of recreation, before the usher took us in a file to the Lycée Charlemagne, the wealthy boys got breakfast at the lodge, provided by the porter named Doisy. M. Lepître either knew nothing of Doisy's business, or he winked at it. The man was a perfect smuggler, made much of by the boys in their own interest; he was the screen for all our mischief, our confidant when we stole in after hours, our go-between with the lending library for prohibited books. Breakfast with a cup of coffee was in the most aristocratic taste, in consequence of the exorbitant price to which colonial products rose under Napoleon. If the use of coffee and of sugar was a luxury to our parents, in us it was a sign of such arrogant superiority as was enough to give us a passion for it, if the tendency to imitation, greediness, and the infection of fashion had not been enough. Doisy gave us credit; he supposed that every schoolboy must have sisters or aunts who would uphold his honor and pay his debts.

For a long time I resisted the blandishments of the coffee-bar. If my judges could have known the force of temptation, the heroic efforts of my soul to attain to such stoicism,

and the suppressed rages of my long resistance, they would have dried away my tears instead of provoking them to flow. But, boy as I was, could I have acquired the magnanimity which leads us to scorn the scorn of others? And I was also feeling perhaps the temptations of various social vices whose power was increased by my longing.

At the end of the second year my father and mother came to Paris. The day of their arrival was announced to me by my brother; he was living in Paris, but had not paid me a single visit. My sisters were to come too, and we were all to see Paris together. The first day we were to dine at the Palais-Royal to be close to the Théâtre-Français. In spite of the intoxicating delight of such a programme of un hoped-for joys, my glee was mitigated by the sense of a coming storm, which so easily blights those who are inured to troubles. I had to confess a debt of a hundred francs to the Sieur Doisy, who threatened to apply to my parents for the money. I determined to make use of my brother as Doisy's dragoman, to plead my repentance and mediate for forgiveness. My father was in favor of mercy; but my mother was relentless; her dark-blue eye petrified me, and she fulminated terrible forecasts.

"If I allowed myself such licenses at seventeen, what should I become later? Could I be a son of hers? Did I want to ruin the family? Was I the only child to be thought of? The career on which my brother Charles had embarked required an independent income, and he deserved it, for he had already done the family credit, while I should disgrace it. Did I know nothing of the value of the money I cost them? What benefit to my education would come of coffee and sugar? Was not such conduct an apprenticeship to every vice?" Marat was an angel as compared with me.

After enduring the shock of this torrent, which filled my soul with terrors, my brother took me back to the boarding-house, I lost my dinner at the Trois Frères Provençaux, and was deprived of seeing Talma in *Britannicus*. This was my interview with my mother after a parting of twelve years.

When I had gone through the "humanities," my father still left me in the care of M. Lepître. I was to study higher

mathematics, to work at law for a year, and begin the higher branches.

Now, as a private boarder, and free from attending classes, I hoped for a truce between misery and me. But notwithstanding that I was now nineteen—or perhaps because I was nineteen—my father continued the system which had of old sent me to school without sufficient food, to college without pocket-money, and had run me into debt to Doisy. I had very little money at command, and what can be done in Paris without money? My liberty, too, was ingeniously fettered. M. Lepître always sent me to the law-schools with an usher at my heels, who handed me over to the professor, and came again to escort me back. A girl would have been watched with less care than my mother's fears devised for my protection. Paris had justifiable terrors for my parents. Students are secretly interested in the selfsame thoughts as fill the heads of schoolgirls; do what you will, a girl always talks of lovers, a youth of women.

But in Paris at that time the conversation of fellow-students was tinged by the Oriental and Sultan-like world of the Palais-Royal. The Palais-Royal was an Eldorado of love where ingots ready coined were current every evening. Virgin doubts were there enlightened, and there our curiosity might find gratification. The Palais-Royal and I were asymptotes, ever tending to meet, but never meeting.

This is how fate thwarted my hopes. My father had introduced me to one of my aunts, who lived in the Île Saint-Louis, and I was to dine there every Thursday and Sunday, escorted thither by Mme. or M. Lepître, who went out themselves on those days, and called for me on their way home in the evening. A singular form of recreation! The Marquise de Listomère was a very ceremonious fine lady, to whom it never occurred to make me a present of a crown-piece. As old as a cathedral, as much painted as a miniature, and magnificently dressed, she lived in her mansion just as though Louis XV. were still alive, seeing none but old ladies and gentlemen, a company of fossils among whom I felt as if I were in a cemetery. No one ever spoke to me, and I had not the courage to speak first. Cold looks of

aversion made me feel ashamed of my youth, which was so annoying to all the others.

I hoped for the success of an escapade based on their indifference, making up my mind to steal off one evening directly after dinner and fly to the wooden galleries. My aunt, when once she was absorbed in whist, paid no further heed to me. Jean, her man-servant, cared little enough for M. Lepître; but those ill-starred dinners were, unfortunately, lengthy in consequence of the antiquity of the jaws or the weakness of the teeth of that ancient company.

At last, one evening between eight and nine, I had got as far as the stairs, as tremulous as Bianca Capello when she made her escape; but just as the porter had let me out, I saw M. Lepître's cab in the street, and the worthy man asking for me in his wheezy tones. Three times did fate come between the hell of the Palais-Royal and the paradise of my youth. On the day when, ashamed of being so ignorant, and already twenty, I determined to defy every evil to gain my end—at the very moment when I was about to evade M. Lepître as he got into a hackney coach (a difficult matter, for he had a club foot, and was as stout as Louis XVIII.)—who should appear but my mother, arriving in a post-chaise. I was riveted by her eye, and stood like a bird fascinated by a serpent.

What chance had led to this meeting? Nothing could be simpler. Napoleon was making a last effort. My father, foreseeing the return of the Bourbons, had come to explain matters to my brother, who was already embarked in diplomacy under the Imperial rule. He had come from Tours with my mother. My mother had undertaken to convey me home, to remove me from the dangers which, to those who were keen enough to follow the advance of the enemy, seemed to threaten the capital. Thus, in a few minutes I was snatched from Paris, just as my residence there would have proved fateful.

The torments of an imagination forever agitated by thwarted desires, and the weariness of a life saddened by constant privations, had thrown me into study, just as in former times men weary of life shut themselves up in cloisters.

Study had become a passion with me, which might have blighted me utterly by imprisoning me at an age when young men ought to be free to enjoy the activities of their natural springtime.

This slight sketch of my early years, in which you can imagine much sadness, was necessary to give you some idea of the effect of that training on my later life. Bearing the stamp of so many adverse influences, at the age of twenty I was stunted, thin, and pale. My spirit, full of cravings, struggled with a body which was frail indeed in appearance, but which—as an old doctor of Tours was wont to say—was going through the last annealing process of an iron temperament. Young in body and old in mind, I had read and thought so much, that I was metaphysically familiar with life in its highest summits, just when I was about to explore the tortuous difficulties of its narrow passes and the sandy ways of its plains. Exceptional chances had kept me late in that delightful phase when the soul is conscious of its first agitation, when it is opening to its first raptures, when everything is fresh and full of savor. I was standing between boyhood prolonged by study, and manhood late in showing its green shoots. No young man was ever more fully prepared than I to feel and to love.

To fully understand my narrative, think of me at the charming age when the lips are pure from falsehood, when the eyes are honest though veiled by lids weighed down by shyness in conflict with desire, when the spirit is not yet abject before jesuitical worldliness, and when the heart is as timid as its first impulses are vehemently generous.

I need say nothing of my journey from Paris to Tours with my mother. Her cold demeanor crushed the effusiveness of my affection. As we started afresh after each relay, I resolved to talk to her; but a look or a word scared away the phrases I had composed as a beginning. At Orleans, where we were to sleep, my mother reproached me for my silence. I fell at her knees and clasped them, shedding hot tears; I poured out my heart to her, bursting with affection; I tried to soften her by the eloquence of my pleading; starv-



ing for love, my words might have stirred the soul of a step-mother. My mother told me I was acting a farce. I complained of her neglect; she called me an unnatural son. There was such a cold grip about my heart that at Blois I went out on the bridge to throw myself into the Loire. I was put off from suicide simply by the height of the parapet.

On my arrival, my two sisters, who scarcely knew me, showed more surprise than warmth; later, however, by comparison they seemed to me full of kindness. I was given a bedroom on the third floor. You will understand the extent of my wretchedness when I tell you that my mother left me, a grown man, with no linen but my shabby college outfit, and no wardrobe but what I had brought from Paris.

When I flew from one end of the drawing-room to the other to pick up her handkerchief, she gave me thanks as cold as she might have granted to a servant. Watching her anxiously as I did, to discover whether there were in her heart a friable spot where I could insert some buds of affection, I saw her a tall, parched, thin woman, a gambler, selfish and insolent—like all the Listomères, in whom impertinence is part of their dower. She saw nothing in life but duties to be performed; every cold-hearted woman I have ever met has made duty her religion, as she did; she accepted our adoration as a priest accepts incense at Mass; my elder brother seemed to have absorbed the modicum of maternal feeling her heart could contain. She was constantly inflicting small stings of biting irony, the weapon of heartless people, which she freely used on us who could not retort.

In spite of all these thorny barriers, instinctive feeling is held by so many roots, the pious terror inspired by a mother includes so many ties—indeed, to give her up as hopeless is too cruel a shock—that the sublime blunder of loving her lasted till a day when at a riper age we judged her truly. Then began her children's reprisals. Their indifference, resulting from the disenchantment of the past, enhanced by the slimy wreckage they have rescued from it, overflows her tomb even.

This frightful despotism drove out the voluptuous dreams I had madly hoped to realize at Tours. I flung myself

desperately into my father's library, where I read all the books I did not already know. My long hours of study spared me all contact with my mother; but they left me, morally, worse off than ever. My eldest sister, who has since married our cousin the Marquis de Listomère, sometimes tried to comfort me without being able to soothe the irritation from which I suffered. I longed for death.

Great events, of which I knew nothing, were then in the air. The Duc d'Angoulême, having left Bordeaux to join Louis XVIII. in Paris, was to be the recipient of the ovations prepared by the enthusiasm that possessed France on the return of the Bourbons. Touraine in a ferment round its legitimate princes, the town in a turmoil, the windows hung with flags, the residents all in their best, the preparations for the fête, the indefinable something in the air which mounted to my head, all made me long to be present at the ball that was to be given to the Prince. When, greatly daring, I expressed this wish to my mother—at that time too ill to go out—she was extremely wroth. Had I dropped from the Congo, that I knew nothing of what was going on? How could I imagine that the family would not be fitly represented at the ball? In the absence of my father and brother, of course it would be my part to go. Had I no mother? Did she never think of her children's happiness?—In a moment the almost disowned son had become a person of importance. I was as much amazed by finding myself of consequence as by the deluge of ironical reasoning with which my mother received my request.

I questioned my sisters, and heard that my mother, who liked theatrical surprises, had necessarily considered the matter of my dress. The tailors of Tours, in the sudden rush of customers, could none of them undertake to fit me out. So my mother had sent for a needlewoman, who, as usual in provincial towns, was supposed to be able to do every kind of sewing. A blue coat was secretly made for me, more or less successfully. Silk stockings and new pumps were easily procured; men wore their waistcoats short, and I could have one of my father's; for the first time in my life I donned a shirt with a goffered frill that gave importance to my figure

and was lost in the folds of my cravat. When I was dressed, I was so little like myself that my sisters' compliments gave me courage to make my appearance before the whole of assembled Touraine.

It was a formidable enterprise! But too many were called to this festivity to allow of there being many elect. Thanks to my slender figure, I was able to creep into a tent in the gardens of the Maison Papion, and got close to the armchair in which the Prince was enthroned. In an instant I was stifled by the heat, dazzled by the lights, by the crimson hangings, the gilt ornaments, the dresses and the diamonds of the first public function I had ever attended. I was pushed about by a throng of men and women, all hustling and crowding each other in a cloud of dust. The blatant brass and Bourbon strains of the military band were drowned by shouts of—

“Hurrah for the Duc d'Angoulême! Long live the King! Hurrah for the Bourbons!”

The fête was an outbreak of enthusiasm in which everyone vied with the rest in his vehement eagerness to hail the rising sun of the Bourbons, a display of party selfishness that left me cold, made me feel small and shrink into myself.

Carried away like a straw in a whirlpool, I was childishly wishing that I were the Duc d'Angoulême, and could mingle with these Princes thus made a show of to the staring crowd. This silly provincial fancy gave rise to an ambition dignified by my character and by circumstances. Who might not have coveted this worship, repeated on a more splendid scale a few months later when all Paris rushed to greet the Emperor on his return from the island of Elba? This supreme power over the masses, whose feelings and vitality discharge themselves into one soul, made me a sudden devotee to Glory, the goddess who puts the French to the sword nowadays, as the Druidess of old sacrificed the Gauls.

And then, as suddenly, I saw the woman who was fated to goad perpetually my ambitious hopes and to crown them by throwing me into contact with Royalty.

Too shy to ask anyone to dance with me, and fearing, too, that I might make confusion in the figures, I naturally felt

very awkward, not knowing what to do with myself. Just when I was most conscious of the fatigue of constantly moving under the pressure of the crowd, an officer trod on my feet, which were swollen by the pressure of my shoes and by the heat. This crowning annoyance disgusted me with the whole affair. It was impossible to get away, and I took refuge in a corner at the extreme end of a vacant bench, where I sat down, my gaze fixed, motionless, and sulky. A woman, misled by my delicate looks, took me for a boy half asleep while awaiting my mother's pleasure, and seated herself by me with the light movement of a bird settling on its nest. I was at once aware of a feminine fragrance which flashed upon my soul as Oriental poetry has flashed upon it since. I looked at my neighbor, and was more dazzled by her than I had been by the ball.

If you have at all entered into my previous life, you can guess the emotions that swelled by heart. My eyes were suddenly fascinated by white rounded shoulders that made me long to bury my face in them, shoulders faintly pink, as if they were blushing to find themselves bare for the first time, bashful shoulders with a soul of their own and a satin skin shining in the light like a silken fabric. Between these shoulders ran a furrow which my eyes, bolder than my hand, glided into. My heart beat as I stood up to look over them, and I was entirely captivated by a bosom modestly covered with gauze, perfect in roundness, and bluely veined as it lay softly bedded in lace frills. The least details of the charming head were allurements stirring me to endless delight: the sheen of the hair knotted above a neck as peach-like as a little girl's, the white partings made by the comb along which my imagination played as in a new-made path—everything together turned my brain.

Looking round to make sure that no one saw me, I buried my face in that back as a baby hides in its mother's breast, and kissed those shoulders all over, rubbing my cheek against them. The lady gave a piercing cry, inaudible above the music; she turned sharply round, saw me, and said, "Mon-sieur!"

If she had said, "My good boy, what possesses you?" I

should perhaps have killed her; but this word *Monsieur* brought hot tears to my eyes.

I was petrified by a look fired with righteous anger, and an exquisite face crowned with a plait of fair brown hair, in harmony with those adorable shoulders. The crimson of offended modesty flamed in her face, which was already softening with a woman's forgiveness for a mad act when she is the cause of it, and when she sees a passion of worship in the tears of repentance. She rose and walked away with the dignity of a queen.

Then I understood how ridiculous was my position; then, and not till then, I felt that I was dressed like a Savoyard's monkey. I was ashamed. I sat there quite stupefied, relishing the apple I had stolen, feeling on my lips the warmth of the blood I had scented; quite unrepentant, and following with my eyes this being come down from heaven. Then, overpowered by this first physical indulgence of my heart's wild fever, I wandered through the ballroom, now a desert, without finding the unknown vision. I went home and to bed, an altered creature.

A new soul, a soul with iridescent wings, had burst its chrysalis within me. My favorite star, dropping from the blue waste where I had admired it, had become woman, while preserving its light, its sparkle, and its brilliancy. Suddenly, knowing nothing of love, I had fallen in love. Is not this first irruption of the most intense feeling a man can know a very strange thing? I had met some pretty women in my aunt's drawing-room; they had not made the slightest impression on me. Is there an hour, a conjunction of the stars, a combination of fitting circumstances, a particular woman above all other women, which seal a passion as exclusive at the age when passion includes the whole female sex?

As I thought that my chosen lady dwelt in Touraine, I inhaled the air with rapture; I saw a blue in the sky which I have never since perceived elsewhere.

Though mentally I was in ecstasy, I seemed to be very ill; my mother was at once alarmed and remorseful. Like animals aware of approaching distemper, I would creep into a corner of the garden to dream of the kisses I had stolen.

A few days after the memorable ball my mother began to ascribe my neglect of study, my indifference to her searching looks, my heedlessness of her irony, and my gloomy behavior, to the natural development of a growing man. Country air, the universal remedy for every malady of which science can give no account, was regarded as the best means of curing me of my apathy. My mother decided that I should spend a few days at Frapesle, a château on the Indre, between Montvazon and Azay-le-Rideau, with a friend of hers, to whom, no doubt, she gave her private instructions.

On the day when I was thus given the key of the fields, I had plunged so deeply into the ocean of love that I had crossed it. I knew not my fair one's name; what could I call her or where could I find her? To whom indeed could I speak of her? My natural shyness increased the unaccountable terrors which possess a young heart at the first flutter of love, and made me begin with the melancholy which is the end of a hopeless passion. I was quite content to come and go and wander about the country, with the childlike spirit that is ready for anything and has a certain tinge of chivalry; I was prepared to hunt through all the country-houses of Touraine, wandering on foot, and saying at each pretty turret, "It will be there!"

So one Thursday morning I left Tours by the Saint-Eloy gate, I crossed the bridges of Saint-Sauveur, I reached Poncher, my nose in the air in front of every house I passed, and was on the road to Chinon. For the first time in my life I could rest under a tree, walk fast or slowly as I list, without being called to account by anyone. To a poor creature so utterly crushed by the various despotisms which weigh more or less on every young life, the first taste of freedom, though exerted in trifles, brought unspeakable expansion to my soul.

Several reasons combined to make that a high day full of delights. In my childhood my walks had never taken me more than a league out of the town. My excursions in the neighborhood of Pont-le-Voy and the walks I had taken in Paris had not surfeited me with rural beauty. Nevertheless, I had retained from the earliest impressions of my life

a strong feeling of the beauty inherent in the scenery round Tours, with which I was familiar. Thus, though I was new to what constitutes the poetry of a site, I was unconsciously exacting, as men are who have conceived of the ideal of an art without ever having practiced it.

To go to the château of Frapesle, those who walk or ride shorten the way by crossing the common known as the Landes de Charlemagne, a waste lying at the top of the plateau which divides the valley of the Cher from that of the Indre, and which is reached by a crossroad from Champy. This flat and sandy down, depressing enough for about a league, ends in a coppice adjoining the road to Saché, the village nearest to Frapesle. This country lane, leading into the Chinon road at some distance beyond Ballan, skirts an undulating plain devoid of remarkable features as far as the hamlet of Artanne. Thence a valley opens down to the Loire, from Montvazon at the head; the hills seem to rebound under the country-houses on each range of slopes; it is a glorious emerald basin, and at the bottom the Indre winds in serpentine curves. I was startled by the view into a rapturous astonishment for which the dullness of the Landes or the fatigue of my walk had prepared me:—If this woman, the flower of her sex, inhabits a spot on earth, it must be this!

At the thought I leaned against a walnut-tree; and now, whenever I revisit that beloved valley, I go to rest under its boughs. Under that tree, the confidant of all my thoughts, I examine myself as to the changes that may have taken place during the time that has elapsed since last I left it.

My heart had not deceived me: it was there that she dwelt; the first château I could see on a shelf of the down was her home. When I sat down under my walnut-tree, the noonday sun struck sparks from the slates of *her* roof and the glass panes of *her* windows. Her cambric dress was the white spot I could see among some vines under a pleached alley. She was, as you know already, though as yet you know nothing, the Lily of this Valley, where she grew for heaven, filling it with the fragrance of her virtues. I saw an emblem of infinite love with nothing to keep it alive but an object only once seen, in the long watery ribbon which glistens in the

sun between two green banks, in the rows of poplars which deck that vale of love with moving tracery, in the oak woods thrust forward between the vineyards on the hillsides rounded by the river into constant variety, and in the soft outlines crossing each other and fading to the horizon.

If you wish to see Nature fair and virginal as a bride, go thither some spring day; if you want to solace the bleeding wounds of your heart, return in the late days of autumn. In spring Love flutters his wings under the open sky; in autumn we dream of those who are no more. Weak lungs inhale a healing freshness, the eye finds rest on the golden-hued groves from which the soul borrows sweet peace.

At the moment when I looked down on the valley of the Indre, the mills on its falls gave voice to the murmuring vale; the poplars laughed as they swayed; there was not a cloud in the sky; the birds sang, the grasshoppers chirped, everything was melody. Never ask me again why I love Touraine! I do not love it as we love our childhood's home, nor as we love an oasis in the desert; I love it as an artist loves art. I love it less than I love you; still, but for Touraine, perhaps I should not now be alive.

Without knowing why, my eyes were riveted to the white spot, to the woman who shone in that garden as the bell of a convolvulus shines among shrubs and is blighted by a touch. My soul deeply stirred, I went down into this bower, and presently saw a village, which to my highly strung poetic mood seemed matchless. Picture to yourself three mills, charmingly situated among pretty islets with imbayed banks, and crowned with clumps of trees, in the midst of a meadow of water; for what other name can I give to the aquatic vegetation, so brightly tinted, which carpets the stream, floats on its surface, follows its eddies, yields to its caprices, and bends to the turmoil of waters lashed by the mill-wheels. Here and there rise shoals of pebbles on which the river breaks in a fringe of surf reflecting the sun. Amaryllis, water-lilies, white and yellow, reeds, and phlox dress the banks with glorious hues. A crumbling bridge of rotten timbers, its piles hung with flowers, its balustrade covered with herbage and velvety mosses, and hanging over the stream, but not



yet fallen; time-worn boats, fishing-nets, the monotonous song of a shepherd, ducks paddling from isle to isle, or preening themselves on the shoals—*le jard*, as the coarse gravel deposited by the Loire is called; miller's men, a cap over one ear, loading their mules; every detail made the scene strikingly artless. Then, beyond the bridge, imagine two or three farms, a dovecote, sundry turrets, thirty houses or more, standing apart in gardens divided by hedges of honeysuckle, jessamine, and clematis; heaps of manure in front of every door, and cocks and hens in the road—and you see the village of Pont-du-Ruan, a pretty hamlet crowned with an old church of characteristic style, a church of the time of the Crusades, such as painters love for their pictures. Set it all in the midst of ancient walnut-trees, of young poplars with their pale gold foliage, add some elegant dwellings rising from broad meadows where the eye loses itself under the warm misty sky, and you will have some idea of the thousand beauties of this lovely country.

I followed the lane to Saché along the left bank of the river, noting the details of the hills that broke the line of the opposite shore. At last I reached a park of venerable trees which showed me that I was at Frapesle. I arrived exactly as the bell was ringing for late breakfast. After this meal, my host, never suspecting that I had come from Tours on foot, took me all over his grounds, and from every part of them I could see the valley under various aspects; here through a vista, and there spread out before me. In many places my gaze was attracted to the horizon by the broad golden tide of the Loire, where between the rolling hills sails showed their fantastic shapes flying before the wind. As I climbed a ridge I could admire for the first time the château of Azay, a diamond with a thousand facets, with the Indre for a setting, and perched on piles buried in flowers. There in a dell I saw the romantic mass of the château of Saché, a melancholy spot, full of harmonies too sad for superficial minds, but dear to poets whose spirit is stricken. I myself at a later time loved its silence, its huge hoary trees, and the mystery that seemed to hang over that deserted hollow!—And still, each time I caught sight, on the shoulder

of the next hill, of the pretty little château I had seen and chosen at a first glance, my eye lingered on it with delight.

"Oh, ho!" said my host, reading in my eyes an eager desire such as a youth of my age expresses without guile, "you scent a pretty woman from afar as a dog scents game."

I did not like the tone of this remark, but I asked the name of the place and of the owner.

"It is Clochegourde," said he, "a pretty house belonging to the Comte de Mortsauf, the representative of a family noted in the history of Touraine, whose fortune dates from the time of Louis XI., and whose name reveals the adventure to which he owes his arms and his fame. He is descended from a man who survived hanging. The arms borne by the Mortsaufs are:—*Or, on a cross potent and counter potent, sable, a fleur-de-lys rooted, of the field. Motto, Dieu sauve le Roi notre Sire.*

"The Count came to settle here on the return of the émigrés. The house of Lenoncourt-Givry becomes extinct in his wife, who was a Demoiselle de Lenoncourt; Mme. de Mortsauf is an only child. The small wealth of this family is in such strong contrast to the splendor of their names that from pride—or perhaps from necessity—they always live at Clochegourde, and see no one. Hitherto their devotion to the Bourbons may have justified their isolation; but I doubt whether the King's return will change their way of living. When I settled here last year I paid them a call of politeness; they returned it, and asked us to dinner. Then the winter kept us apart for some months, and political events delayed our return, for I have only lately come home to Frapesle. Mme. de Mortsauf is a woman who might take the first place anywhere."

"Does she often go to Tours?"

"She never goes there. Yes," he added, correcting himself, "she went there quite lately, on the occasion when the Duc d'Angoulême passed through, and was very gracious to M. de Mortsauf."

"It is she!" I cried.

"She! Who?"

"A woman with beautiful shoulders."

"You will find many women with beautiful shoulders in Touraine," said he, laughing; "but if you are not tired, we can cross the river and go up to Clochegourde, where you may possibly recognize your fine shoulders."

I agreed, not without reddening from pleasure and shyness. By four o'clock we reached the house on which my eyes had so fondly lingered. This little château, which looked well in the landscape, is, in fact, a modest building. It has five windows in front; that at each end of the south front projects by about two yards, giving the effect of wings, and adding to the importance of the house. The middle window serves as the door, whence double steps lead to a garden extending in terraces down to a meadow bordering the Indre. Though this meadow is divided by a lane from the lowest terrace shaded by a row of ailanthus and acacia trees, it looks like part of the grounds, for the lane is sunk between the terrace on one side and a thick hedge on the other. The slope between the house and the river is taken advantage of to avoid the inconvenience of being so near the water without losing the pretty effect. Under the dwelling-house are the stables, coach-houses, storerooms, and kitchens, with doors under archways.

The roof is pleasingly curved at the angles, the dormer windows have carved mullions, and finials of lead over the gables. The slates, neglected no doubt during the Revolution, are covered with the rust-colored and orange clinging lichens that grow on houses facing the south. The glass door at the top of the steps has above it a little campanile on which may be seen the achievement of the Blamont-Chauvrys: Quarterly *gules*, a pale *vair* between two hands proper, and *or*, two lances *sable* in chevron. The motto, *See, but touch not*, struck me strangely. The supporters, a griffin and a dragon chained *or*, had a good effect in sculpture. The Revolution had damaged the ducal coronet and the crest, a palm branch *vert* fruited *or*. Senart, Secretary to the Committee of Public Safety, was Bailiff of Saché till 1781, which accounts for this destruction.

The decorative character gives an elegant appearance to this country-house, as delicately finished as a flower, and

hardly seeming to weigh on the ground. Seen from the valley, the ground-floor looks as if it were the first floor; but on the side towards the courtyard it is on the same level as a wide path ending in a lawn graced with raised flower-beds. To right and left vineyards, orchards, and some arable land dotted with walnut-trees slope away steeply, surrounding the house with verdure down to the brink of the river, which is bordered on this side with clumps of trees whose various tints of green have been grouped by the hand of Nature.

As I mounted the winding road to Clochegourde, I admired these well-assorted masses, and breathed an atmosphere redolent of happiness. Has our moral nature, like physical nature, electric discharges and swift changes of temperature? My heart throbbed in anticipation of the secret events which were about to transform it once for all, as animals grow sportive before fine weather. This, the most important day in my life, was not devoid of any circumstance that could contribute to sanctify it. Nature had dressed herself like a maiden going forth to meet her beloved; my soul had heard her voice for the first time, my eyes had admired her, as fruitful, as various as my imagination had painted her in those day-dreams at school of which I have told you something, but too little to explain their influence over me, for they were as an apocalypse figuratively predicting my life; every incident of it, happy or sad, is connected with them by some whimsical image, by ties visible only to the eye of the soul.

We crossed an outer court, inclosed by the outbuildings of a rural habitation—a granary, a winepress, cow-houses, and stables. A servant, warned by the barking of a watchdog, came out to meet us, and told us that M. le Comte, who had gone to Azay in the morning, would presently return no doubt, and that Mme. la Comtesse was at home. My host looked at me. I trembled to think that he might not choose to call on Mme. de Mortsau in her husband's absence, but he bid the servant to announce our names.

Driven by childish eagerness, I hurried into the long ante-room which ran across the house.

“Come in, pray” said a golden voice.

Although Mme. de Mortsauf had spoken but one word at the ball, I recognized her voice, which sank into my soul, and filled it as a sunbeam fills and gilds a prisoner's cell. Then, reflecting that she might recognize me, I longed to fly; it was too late; she appeared at the drawing-room door, and our eyes met. Which of us reddened most deeply I do not know. She returned to her seat in front of an embroidery framè, the servant having pushed forward two chairs; she finished drawing her needle through as an excuse for her silence, counted two or three stitches, and then raised her head, that was at once proud and gentle, to ask M. de Chessel to what happy chance she owed the pleasure of his visit.

Though curious to know the truth as to my appearance there, she did not look at either of us; her eyes were fixed on the river; but from the way she listened, it might have been supposed that she had the faculty of the blind, and knew all the agitations of my soul by the least accent of speech. And this was the fact.

M. de Chessel mentioned my name and sketched my biography. I had come to Tours some few months since with my parents, who had brought me home when the war threatened Paris. She saw in me a son of Touraine, to whom the province was unknown, a young man exhausted by excessive work, sent to Frapesle to rest and amuse myself, and to whom he had shown his estate, as it was my first visit. I had told him, only on reaching the bottom of the hill, that I had walked from Tours that morning; and fearing over-fatigue, as my health was feeble, he had ventured to call at Clochegourde, thinking she would allow me to rest there. M. de Chessel spoke the exact truth. But a genuinely happy chance seems so elaborate an invention, that Mme. de Mortsauf was still distrustful; she looked at me with eyes so cold and stern, that I lowered mine, as much from a vague sense of humiliation as to hide the tears I withheld from falling. The haughty lady saw that my brow was moist with sweat; perhaps, too, she guessed the tears, for she offered me any refreshment I might need with a comforting kindness which restored my powers of speech.

I blushed like a girl caught in the wrong, and in a voice

quavering like an old man's I replied with thanks, but declining anything.

"All I wish," I said, raising my eyes, which met hers for the second time, but for an instant as short as a lightning-flash, "is that you will allow me to remain here; I am so stiff with fatigue that I cannot walk."

"How can you doubt the hospitality of our lovely province?" said she. "You will perhaps give us the pleasure of seeing you at dinner at Clochegourde?" she added to her neighbor.

I flashed a look at my friend, a look so full of entreaty, that he beat about the bush a little to accept this invitation, which, by its form, required a refusal.

Though knowledge of the world enabled M. de Chessel to distinguish so subtle a shade, an inexperienced youth believes so firmly in the identity of word and thought in a handsome woman, that I was immensely surprised when, as we went home in the evening, my host said to me—

"I stayed because you were dying to do so; but if you cannot patch matters up, I may be in a scrape with my neighbors."

This "if you cannot patch matters up" gave me matter for thought. If Mme. de Mortsauf liked me, she could not be annoyed with the man who had introduced me to her. So M. de Chessel thought I might be able to interest her—was not this enough to give me the power? This solution confirmed my hopes at a moment when I needed such support.

"That is hardly possible," replied M. de Chessel, "my wife expects us."

"She has you every day," replied the Countess, "and we can send her a message. Is she alone?"

"She has the Abbé de Quéulus with her."

"Very well then," said she, rising to ring the bell, "you will dine with us."

This time M. de Chessel thought her sincere, and gave me a look of congratulation.

As soon as I was certain of spending a whole evening under this roof, I felt as if eternity were mine. To many an unhappy wretch to-morrow is a word devoid of meaning,

and at this moment I was one of those who have no belief in to-morrow; when I had a few hours to call my own, I crowded a lifetime of rapture into them.

Mme. de Mortsauf then began to talk of the country, of the crops, of the vines—subjects to which I was a stranger. In the mistress of a house this behavior argues want of breeding, or else contempt for the person she thus shuts out of the conversation, but in the Countess it was simply embarrassment. Though at first I fancied she was affecting to regard me as a boy, and envied the privilege of thirty years, which allowed M. de Chessel to entertain his fair neighbor with such serious matters, of which I understood nothing, and though I tormented myself by thinking that everything was done for him; within a few months I knew all that a woman's silence can mean, and how many thoughts are disguised by desultory conversation.

I at once tried to sit at my ease in my chair; then I perceived the advantage of my position, and gave myself up to the delight of hearing the Countess's voice. The breath of her soul lurked behind the procession of syllables, as sound is divided in the notes of a keyed flute; it died undulating on the ear, whence it seemed to drive the blood. Her way of pronouncing words ending in *i* was like the song of birds; her pronunciation of *ch* was like a caress; and the way in which she spoke the letter *t* betrayed a despotic heart. She unconsciously expanded the meaning of words, and led your spirit away into a supernatural world. How often have I permitted a discussion to go on which I might have ended; how often have I allowed myself to be unjustly blamed, merely to hear that music of the human voice, to breathe the air that came from her lips so full of her soul, to clasp that spoken light with as much ardor as I could have thrown into pressing the Countess to my heart! What a song, as of some joyful swallow, when she could laugh; but what a ring, as of a swan calling to its fellow-swans, when she spoke of her sorrows!

The Countess's inattention to me allowed me to study her. My eyes feasted as they gazed at the lovely speaker; they embraced her form, kissed her feet, played with the ringlets

of her hair. And all the time I was a prey to the terror which only those can understand who have, in the course of their lives, known the immeasurable joys of a genuine passion. I was afraid lest she should detect my gaze fixed on the spot between her shoulders which I had kissed so ardently. My fear whetted the temptation, and I yielded to it. I looked, my eye rent the stuff of her dress, and I saw a mole that marked the top of the pretty line between her shoulders, a speck lying on milk; this, ever since the ball, had blazed out of the darkness in which the sleep of youths seems to float when their imagination is ardent and their life chaste.

I can sketch for you the principal features which would everywhere have attracted attention to the Countess; but the most exact drawing, the warmest glow of color, would express nothing of it. Her face is one of those of which no one could give a true portrait but the impossible artist whose hand can paint the glow of inward fires, and render the luminous essence which science denies, which language has no word for, but which a lover sees. Her mass of fine hair often gave her headaches, caused no doubt by a sudden rush of blood to the head. Her rounded forehead, prominent like that of *La Gioconda*, seemed to be full of unspoken ideas, of suppressed feelings—flowers drowned in bitter waters. Her eyes were greenish, with spots of hazel, and always pale in color; but when her children were concerned, or if she were betrayed into any vehement emotion of joy or grief, rare in the life of a resigned wife, her eye could flash with a subtle flame, which seemed to have derived its fire from the deepest springs of life, and which would no doubt dry them up; a lightning gleam that has wrung tears from me when she shed on me her terrible disdain, and that she found adequate to abash the boldest gaze.

A Greek nose that Phidias might have chiseled, joined by a double curve to lips of exquisite shape, gave strength to her oval face; and her complexion, like a camellia-petal, was charmingly tinted with tender rose in the cheeks. She was not thin, but this did not detract from the grace of her figure, nor from the roundness that made every outline



beautiful, though fully developed. You will at once understand the character of this perfection when I tell you that at the junction with the upper arm of the dazzling bosom that had bewitched me, there could be no roll nor wrinkle. Her throat, where her head was set on, showed none of those hollows that make some women's necks look like tree-trunks; the muscles showed no cords, and every line was curved with a grace as distracting to the eye as to the painter's brush. A delicate down died away on her cheeks, and on the back of her neck, catching the light with a silky sheen. Her ears were small and shapely—the ears of a slave and of a mother, she used to say. Later, when I dwelt in her heart, she would say, “Here comes M. de Mortsaufr,” and be quite right, when I could as yet hear nothing—I, whose hearing is remarkably keen. Her arms were beautiful; her hands with their turned-up finger-tips, were long, and the nails set into the flesh as in antique statues.

I should offend you by attributing greater beauty to a flat figure than to a full one, but that you are an exception. A round figure is a sign of strength; but women who are built so are imperious, wilful, and voluptuous rather than tender. Women who are flatly formed are, on the contrary, self-sacrificing, full of refinement, and inclined to melancholy; they are more thoroughly women. A flat figure is soft and supple; a full one is rigid and jealous. Now you know the kind of shape she had. She had the foot of a lady; a foot that walks little, is easily tired, and is engaging to look upon when it peeps from under the petticoat.

Though she was the mother of two children, I have never met with any woman more genuinely maidenly. Her expression was so girlish, and at the same time amazed and dreamy, that it brought the eye back to gaze, as a painter invites it back to a face in which his genius has embodied a world of feelings. Her visible qualities indeed can only be expressed by comparisons. Do you remember the wild, austere fragrance of a heath we plucked on our way home from the Villa Diodati, a flower you admired so much for its coloring of pink and black,—then you will understand how this woman could be elegant though so far from the world,

natural in her expressions, refining all that came to belong to her—pink and black. Her frame had the green tenderness we admire in leaves but just opened, her mind had the intense concentration of a savage's, she was a child in feeling sobered by grief, the mistress of the house, and an unwedded soul.

She was charming without artifice in her way of sitting down, of rising, of being silent, or of throwing out a remark. Habitually reserved, and vigilant as the sentinel on whom the safety of all depends, ever on the watch for disaster, she sometimes smiled in a way that betrayed a laughing spirit buried under the demeanor required by her mode of life. Her womanly vanity had become a mystery; she inspired romance instead of the gallant attentions which most women love; she revealed her genuine self, her living fire, her blue dreams, as the sky shows between parting clouds. This involuntary self-betrayal made a man thoughtful, unless indeed he were conscious of an unshed tear, dried by the fire of his passion.

The rareness of her movements, and yet more of her looks—for she never looked at anybody but her children—gave incredible solemnity to all she did and said, when she did or said a thing with that manner which a woman can assume if she is compromising her dignity by an avowal.

Mme. de Mortsauf was, on that day, wearing a cambric gown with fine pink stripes, a collar with a broad hem, a black sash and black boots. Her hair was simply twisted into a knot and held by a tortoiseshell comb.

There is the promised sketch. But the constant emanation of her spirit on all who were about her, that nourishing element diffused in waves as the sun diffuses its light, her essential nature, her attitude in serene hours, her resignation in a storm, all the chances of life which develop character, depend, like atmospheric changes, on unexpected and transient circumstances which have no resemblance to each other excepting in the background against which they are seen. This will inevitably be depicted as part of the incidents of this narrative—a true domestic epic, as great in the sight of the wise as tragedies are in the eyes of the crowd; a tale which

will interest you, both by the part I played in it and by its resemblance to that of many a woman's destiny.

Everything at Clochegourde was characterized by English neatness. The drawing-room in which the Countess was sitting was paneled throughout, and painted in two shades of stone color. On the chimney shelf stood a clock in a mahogany case surmounted by a tazza, and flanked by two large white-and-gold china jars in which stood two Cape heaths. On the console was a lamp; in front of the fireplace a backgammon board. Thick cotton ropes looped back the plain white calico curtains without any trimming. Holland covers, bound with green galoon, were over all the chairs, and the worsted work stretched on the Countess's frame sufficiently revealed the reason for so carefully hiding the furniture. This simplicity was really dignified. No room, of all I have seen since, has ever filled me with such a rush of pregnant impressions as I then felt crowding on me in that drawing-room at Clochegourde—a room as still and remote as its mistress's life, and telling of the monastic regularity of her occupations. Most of my ideas, even my most daring flights in science or in politics, have had their birth there, as perfumes emanate from flowers; and here grew the unknown plant which shed its fertilizing power over me; here glowed the solar heat which developed all that was good and dried up all that was bad in me.

From the window the view extended over the valley from the hill where Pont-de-Ruan lies scattered, to the château of Azay, and the eye could follow the curves of the opposite downs varied by the turrets of Frapesle, the church, village, and manor-house of Saché towering above the meadow land. The scene, in harmony with a peaceful existence, unvaried by any emotions but those of family life, breathed peace into the soul. If I had seen her for the first time here, between the Comte de Mortsauf and her children, instead of discovering her in the splendor of her ball dress, I could not have stolen that delirious kiss, for which at this moment I felt some remorse, believing that it might wreck the future prospects of my passion! No, in the gloomy temper begotten

of my sad life, I should have knelt before her, have kissed her little boots, have dropped some tears on them, and have thrown myself into the Indre.

But, having breathed the jessamine freshness of her skin and tasted the milk in that cup of love, my soul was filled with longing and hope for human joys: I would live, I would wait for the hour of fulfilment as a savage looks out for the moment of revenge. I longed to swing from the branches, to rush among the vines, to wallow in the Indre; my companions should be the silence of the night, the languor of living, the heat of the sun, that I might eat at my leisure the delicious' apple I had bitten into. If she had asked me for the singing-flower, or the riches buried by Morgan the Destroyer, I would have found them for her only to obtain the real riches, the speechless blossom that I longed for.

When I roused myself from the dream into which I had been thrown by contemplating my idol, during which a servant had come in to speak to her, I heard her talking of the Count. Then only did it strike me that a woman belonged to her husband. The thought made my brain reel. I felt a fierce but dreary curiosity to see the possessor of this treasure. Two feelings were uppermost—hatred and fear; hatred, which recognized no obstacle and measured every difficulty without dread; fear, vague indeed but genuine, of the coming struggle, of its result, and, above all, of Her. A prey to indescribable presentiments, I dreaded the handshaking which is so undignified; I had visions of those elastic difficulties against which the firmest will is battered and blunted; I feared the power of inertia, which in our day deprives social life of the moments of climax that passionate souls crave for.

"Here comes M. de Mortsaufr," said she.

I started to my feet like a frightened horse. Though this impulse did not escape the notice of either M. de Chessel or the Countess, I was spared any speechless comment, for a diversion was effected by a little girl, of about six years old as I supposed, who came in saying—

"Here is my father."

"Well, Madeleine?" said her mother.

The child gave her hand to M. de Chessel when he held out his, and looked at me fixedly after making an astonished little courtesy.

"Are you satisfied with her health?" said M. de Chessel to the Countess.

"She is better," replied the mother, stroking the little girl's hair as she sat huddled in her lap.

A question from M. de Chessel taught me the fact that Madeleine was nine years old; I showed some surprise at my mistake, and my astonishment brought a cloud to the mother's brow. My friend shot me one of those looks by which men of the world give us a second education. This was, no doubt, a mother's wound which might not be opened or touched. A frail creature, with colorless eyes and a skin as white as porcelain lighted from within, Madeleine would probably not have lived in the air of a town. Country air, and the care with which her mother brooded over her, had kept the flame alive in a body as delicate as a plant grown in a hothouse in defiance of the severity of a northern climate. Though she was not at all like her mother, she seemed to have her mother's spirit, and that sustained her. Her thin, black hair, her sunken eyes, hollow cheeks, lean arms, and narrow chest told of a struggle between life and death, an unceasing duel in which the Countess had hitherto been victorious. The child made an effort to be gay, no doubt to spare her mother suffering; for now and again, when she was unobserved, she languished like a weeping willow. You might have taken her for a gypsy child suffering from hunger, who had begged her way across country, exhausted but brave, and dressed for her public.

"Where did you leave Jacques?" asked her mother, kissing her on the white line that parted her hair into two bands like a raven's wings.

"He is coming with my father."

The Count at this moment came in, leading his little boy by the hand. Jacques, the very image of his sister, showed the same signs of weakness. Seeing these two fragile children by the side of such a magnificently handsome mother, it was impossible not to understand the causes of the grief

which gave pathos to the Countess's brow and made her silent as to the thoughts which are confided to God alone, but which stamp terrible meaning on the forehead. M. de Mortsauf, as he bowed to me, gave me a glance not so much of inquiry as of the awkward uneasiness of a man whose distrust arises from his want of practical observation and analysis.

After mentioning my name, and what had brought me thither, his wife gave him her seat and left the room. The children, whose eyes centered in their mother's as if they derived their light from her, wanted to go with her; she said, "Stay here, my darlings," and laid her finger on her lips.

They obeyed, but they looked sad.

Oh! To hear that word "darling," what task might one not have undertaken? Like the children, I felt chilled when she was no longer there.

My name changed the Count's impulses with regard to me. From being cold and supercilious, he became, if not affectionate, at least politely pressing, showed me every mark of consideration, and seemed happy to see me. Long ago my father had devoted himself to play a noble but inconspicuous part for our sovereigns, full of danger, but possibly useful. When all was lost, and Napoleon had climbed to the highest pinnacle, like many secret conspirators, he had taken refuge in the peace of a provincial life and quiet home, bowing before accusations as cruel as they were unmerited—the inevitable reward of gamblers who stake all for all or nothing, and collapse after having been the pivot of the political machine. I, knowing nothing of the fortunes, the antecedents, or the prospects of my own family, was equally ignorant of the details of this forgotten history which M. de Mortsauf remembered. However, if the antiquity of my name, in his eyes the most precious hallmark a man could possess, might justify a reception which made me blush, I did not know the real reason till later. For the moment the sudden change put me at my ease. When the two children saw that the conversation was fairly started among us three, Madeleine slipped her head from under her father's hand, looked at the open door, and glided out like an eel, followed by Jacques.

They joined their mother, for I heard them talking and trotting about in the distance, like the hum of bees round the hive that is their home.

I studied the Comte de Mortsauf, trying to guess at his character, but I was so far interested by some leading features as to go no further than a superficial examination of his countenance. Though he was no more than five-and-forty, he looked nearly sixty, so rapidly had he aged in the general wreck which closed the nineteenth century. The fringe of hair, like a monk's, which framed his bald head, ended over his ears in grizzled locks on his temples. His face had a remote resemblance to that of a white wolf with a blood-stained muzzle, for his nose was hot and red, like that of a man whose constitution is undermined, whose digestion is weak, and his blood vitiated by early disease. His flat forehead, too wide for a face that ended in a point, was furrowed across at unequal distances, the result of an open-air life, and not of intellectual labors, of constant ill-fortune, and not of the effort to defy it. His cheek-bones, high and sun-burnt, while the rest of his face was sallow, showed that his frame was so strongly built as to promise a long life.

His bright, tawny, hard eye fell on you like winter sunshine, luminous without heat, restless without thought, distrustful without purpose. His mouth was coarse and domineering, his chin long and flat.

He was tall and thin, with the air of a gentleman who relies on a conventional standard of worth, who feels himself superior to his neighbor by right, inferior in fact. The easy-going habits of a country life made him neglectful of his person; his clothes were those of a country proprietor, regarded alike by the peasants and by his neighbors as merely representing a landed estate. His brown, sinewy hands showed that he never wore gloves, unless for riding, or on Sunday to go to church. His shoes were clumsy.

Although ten years of exile, and ten of agricultural life, had thus affected his appearance, he still bore traces of noble birth. The most rancorous Liberal—a word not then coined—would at once have discerned in him the chivalrous loyalty, the unfading convictions of a constant reader of the

*Quotidienne*, and have admired him as a religious man, devoted to his party, frank as to his political antipathies, incapable of being personally serviceable to his side, very capable of ruining it, and ignorant of the state of affairs in France. The Count was, in fact, one of those upright men who yield not a jot, and obstinately bar all progress, valuable to die weapon in hand at the post assigned to them, but stingy enough to give their life rather than their money.

During dinner I detected in the hollows of his faded cheeks, and in the glances he stole at his children, the traces of certain importunate thoughts which came to die on the surface. Who that saw him could fail to understand him? Who would not have accused him of having transmitted to his children their lack of vitality! But even if he blamed himself, he allowed no one else the right of condemning him. He was as bitter as an authority consciously at fault, but without sufficient magnanimity or charm to make up for the quota of suffering he had thrown into the scale; and that his private life must be full of harshness could be seen in his hard features and ever-watchful eyes.

Thus, when his wife came back, with the two children clinging to her, I apprehended disaster, as when walking over the vaults of a cellar the foot has a sort of sense of the depths below. Looking at these four persons together, looking at them, as I did, each in turn, studying their faces and their attitude towards each other, thoughts of melancholy fell upon my heart as fine gray rain throws a mist over a fair landscape after a bright sunrise.

When the immediate subject of conversation was exhausted, the Count again spoke of me, overlooking M. de Chessel, and telling his wife various facts relating to my family which were perfectly unknown to me. He asked me how old I was. When I told him, the Countess repeated my start of surprise at hearing the age of her little girl. She thought me perhaps about fourteen. This, as I afterwards learnt, was a second tie that bound her to me so closely. I read in her soul. Her motherly instinct was roused, enlightened by a late sunbeam which gave her a hope. On seeing me at past twenty so fragile and yet so wiry, a voice whispered to her



perhaps, "They will live!" She looked at me inquisitively, and I felt at the moment that much ice was melted between us. She seemed to have a thousand questions to ask, but reserved them all.

"If you are ill from overwork," said she, "the air of our valley will restore you."

"Modern education is fatal to children," the Count said. "We cram them with mathematics, we beat them with hammers of science, and wear them out before their time. You must rest here," he went on. "You are crushed under the avalanche of ideas that has been hurled down on you. What an age must we look forward to after all this teaching brought down to the meanest capacity, unless we can forefend the evil by placing education once more in the hands of religious bodies!"

This speech was indeed the forerunner of what he said one day at an election when refusing to vote for a man whose talents might have done good service to the Royalist cause; "I never trust a clever man," said he to the registrar of votes.

He now proposed to take us round the gardens, and rose.

"Monsieur——" said the Countess.

"Well, my dear?" he replied, turning round with a rough haughtiness that showed how much he wished to be master in his own house, and how little he was so at this time.

"Monsieur walked from Tours this morning; M. de Chessel did not know it, and took him for a walk in Frapesle."

"You were very rash," said he to me, "though at your age——" and he wagged his head in token of regret.

The conversation was then resumed. I very soon found out how perverse his Royalism was, and what caution was necessary to swim in his waters without collisions. The servant, now arrayed in livery, announced dinner. M. de Chessel gave his arm to Mme. de Mortsauf, and the Count gayly put his hand in mine to go to the dining-room, which was at the opposite end to the drawing-room, on the same floor.

This room, floored with white tiles made in the country, and wainscoted waist high, was hung with a satin paper

divided into large panels framed with borders of fruit and flowers; the window-curtains were of cotton stuff, bound with red; the sideboards were old Boule inlay, and the woodwork of the chairs, upholstered with needlework, was of carved oak. The table, though abundantly spread, was not luxurious; there was old family plate of various dates and patterns, Dresden china—not yet in fashion again—octagonal water-bottles, agate-handled knives, and bottle stands of Chinese lacquer. But there were flowers in varnished tubs, with notched and gilt rims. I was delighted with these old-fashioned things, and I thought the *Réveillon* paper, with its flowered border, superb.

The glee that filled all my sails hindered me from discerning the insuperable obstacles placed between her and me by this imperturbable life of solitude in the country. I sat by her, at her right, I poured out her wine and water. Yes! Unhoped for joy! I could touch her gown, I ate her bread. Only three hours had gone by, and my life was mingling with hers! And we were bound together too by that terrible kiss, a sort of secret which filled us alike with shame.

I was defiantly base; I devoted myself to pleasing the Count, who met all my civilities halfway; I would have fondled the dog, have been subservient to the children's least whim; I would have brought them hoops or marbles, have been their horse to drive; I was only vexed that they had not already taken possession of me as a thing of their own. Love has its intuition as genius has, and I dimly perceived that his violence and surliness and hostility would be the ruin of my hopes. This dinner was to me a time of exquisite raptures. Finding myself under her roof, I forgot her real coldness, and the indifference that lay beneath the Count's politeness. In love, as in life, there is a period of full growth where it is self-sufficient. I made some blundering answers, in keeping with the secret tumult of my passions; but no one could guess this, much less she who knew nothing of love. The rest of the evening was as a dream.

This beautiful dream came to an end when, by the light of the moon, in the hot fragrant night, I again crossed the Indre amid the white visions that hung over the fields and

shore and hills, hearing the thin, monotonous call on one note, melancholy and incessant, at equal intervals, uttered by some tree-frog of which I know not the scientific name, but which, since that fateful day, I never hear but with extreme delight.

Here, again, though rather late, I discerned, as elsewhere, the stony insensibility against which all my feelings had hitherto been blunted; I wondered whether it would be always thus; I believed myself to be under some fatal influence; the gloomy incidents of my past life struggled with the purely personal joys I had just experienced.

Before re-entering Frapesle, I looked back at Clochegourde and saw below a boat, a punt such as in Touraine is called a *toue*, moored to an ash-tree, and rocking in the stream. This boat belonged to M. de Mortsauf, who used it for fishing.

"Well," said M. de Chessel, when there was no danger of our being overheard, "I need not ask you if you have found the lady of the beautiful shoulders. You may be congratulated on the welcome you received from M. de Mortsauf. The deuce! Why, you have taken the citadel at a blow."

This speech, followed up by the remarks I before mentioned, revived my downcast spirit. I had not spoken a word since leaving Clochegourde, and my host ascribed my silence to happiness.

"How so?" said I, with a touch of irony, which might have seemed to be the outcome of restrained passion.

"He never in his life received anyone so civilly."

"I may confess that I was myself astounded at his politeness," said I, feeling what bitterness lay behind his words.

Though I was too much inexperienced in the ways of the world to understand the cause of M. de Chessel's animus, I was struck by the tone which betrayed it. My host was so unlucky as to be named Durand, and he made himself ridiculous by renouncing his father's name—that of a noted manufacturer who had made an immense fortune during the Revolution, and whose wife was the sole heiress of the Chessel family, an old connection of lawyers risen from the citizen class under Henry IV., like most of the Paris magistracy.

M. de Chessel, ambitious of the highest flight, wished to kill the primitive Durand to attain to the realms he dreamed of. He first called himself Durand de Chessel, then D. de Chessel, then he was M. de Chessel. After the Restoration he endowed an entail with the title of Count under letters-patent granted by Louis XVIII. His children culled the fruits of his audacity without knowing its magnitude. A speech made by a certain satirical prince long clung to his heels: "M. de Chessel generally has something of the Durand about him," said his Highness. And this witticism was long a joy in Touraine.

Parvenus are like monkeys, and not less dexterous. Seen from above we admire their agility in climbing; but when they have reached the top, nothing is to be seen but their more shameful side. The wrong side of my entertainer was made of meanness puffed up with envy. He and a peerage are to this day points that cannot meet. To be pretentious and justify it is the insolence of strength; but a man who is beneath the pretensions he owns to is in a constantly ridiculous position, which affords a feast to petty minds. Now, M. de Chessel has never walked in the straight path of a strong man; he has twice been elected deputy, twice rejected of the electors; one day Director-General, the next nothing, at all, not even Préfet; and his successes and defeats have spoiled his temper and given him the acrid greed of an ambitious failure. Though a fine fellow, intelligent, and capable of high achievement, the spirit of envy perhaps—which gives zest to existence in Touraine, where the natives waste their brains in jealous spite—was fatal to him in the higher social spheres, where faces that frown at others' fortune are rarely popular, or sulky lips unready to pay compliments but apt at sarcasm. If he had wished for less, he might perhaps have gained more; but he, unfortunately, was always proud enough to insist on walking upright.

At the time of my visit, M. de Chessel was in the dawn of his ambition, Royalism smiled on him. He affected grand airs perhaps, but to me he was the perfection of kindness. I liked him, too, for a very simple reason: under his roof I found peace for the first time in my life. The interest he

took in me—little enough I dare say—seemed to me, the hapless outcast of my family, a model of paternal affection. The attentions of hospitality formed such a contrast with the indifference that had hitherto crushed me, that I showed childlike gratitude for being allowed to live unfettered and almost petted. The owners of Frapesle are indeed so intimately part of the dawn of my happiness, that they dwell in my mind with the memories I love to live in. At a later time, in the very matter of the King's letters-patent, I had the satisfaction of doing my host some little service.

M. de Chessel spent his fortune with an amount of display that aggrieved some of his neighbors; he could buy fine horses and smart carriages; his wife dressed handsomely; he entertained splendidly; his servants were more numerous than the manners of the country demand; he affected the princely. The estate of Frapesle is vast.

So, as compared with his neighbor, and in the face of all this magnificence, the Comte de Mortsauf, reduced to the family coach, which in Touraine is a cross between a mail-cart and a post-chaise, compelled too by his lack of fortune to make Clochegourde pay, was a Tourangeau, a mere gentleman farmer, till the day when royal favor restored his family to unhopèd-for dignity. The welcome he had extended to me, the younger son of an impoverished family, whose coat-of-arms dates from the Crusades, had been calculated to throw contempt on the wealth, the woods, the farms and meadows of his neighbor, a man of no birth.

M. de Chessel had quite understood the Count. Indeed, their intercourse had always been polite, but without the daily exchange, the friendly intimacy which might have existed between Clochegourde and Frapesle, two domains divided only by the river, and whose mistresses could signal to each other from their windows.

Jealousy, however, was not the only reason for the Comte de Mortsauf's solitary life. His early education had been that given to most boys of good family—an insufficient and superficial smattering, on which were grafted the lessons of the world, Court manners, and the exercise of High Court

functions or some position of dignity. M. de Mortsauf had emigrated just when this second education should have begun, and so missed it. He was one of those who believed in the early restoration of the Monarchy in France; in this conviction he had spent the years of exile in lamentable idleness. Then, when Condé's army was broken up, after the Count's courage had marked him as one of its most devoted soldiers, he still counted on returning ere long with the white standard, and never attempted, like many of the émigrés, to lead an industrious life. Perhaps he could not bear to renounce his name in order to earn his bread in the sweat of the toil he despised.

His hopes, always held over till the morrow, and a sense of honor too, kept him from engaging in the service of a foreign power.

Suffering undermined his strength. Long expeditions on foot without sufficient food, and hopes forever deceived, injured his health and discouraged his spirit. By degrees his poverty became extreme. Though to some men misfortune is a tonic, there are others to whom it is destruction, and the Count was one of these. When I think of this unhappy gentleman of Touraine, wandering and sleeping on the high-roads in Hungary, sharing a quarter of a sheep with Prince Esterhazy's shepherds—from whom the traveler could beg a loaf which the gentleman would not have accepted from their master, and which he many a time refused at the hands of the foes of France—I could never harbor a bitter feeling against the émigré, not even when I saw him ridiculous in his day of triumph.

M. de Mortsauf's white hair had spoken to me of terrible sufferings, and I sympathize with all exiles too strongly to condemn them. The Count's cheerfulness—Frenchman and Tourangeau as he was—quite broke down; he became gloomy, fell ill, and was nursed out of charity in some German asylum. His malady was inflammation of the mesentery, which often proves fatal, and which, if cured, brings in its train a capricious temper, and almost always hypochondria. His amours, buried in the most secret depths of his soul, where I alone ever unearthed them, were of a debasing

character, and not only marred his life at the time, but ruined it for the future.

After twelve years' misery, he came back to France, whither Napoleon's decree enabled him to return. When, as he crossed the Rhine on foot, he saw the steeple of Strasbourg one fine summer evening, he fainted away. —“‘France! France!’ I cried, ‘this is France!’ as a child cries out, ‘Mother!’ when it is hurt,” he told me.

Born to riches, he was now poor; born to lead a regiment or govern the State, he had no authority, no prospects; born healthy and robust, he came home sick and worn out. Bereft of education in a country where men and things had been growing, without interest of any kind, he found himself destitute even of physical and moral strength. His want of fortune made his name a burden to him. His unshaken convictions, his former attachment to Condé, his woes, his memories, his ruined health, had given him a touchy susceptibility, which was likely to find small mercy in France, the land of banter. Half dead, he got as far as Le Maine, where, by some accident, due perhaps to the civil war, the revolutionary government had forgotten to sell a farm of considerable extent, which the farmer in possession had clung to, declaring that it was his own.

When the Lenoncourt family, living at Givry, a château not far from this farm, heard that the Comte de Mortsauf had come back, the Duc de Lenoncourt went to offer him shelter at Givry till he should have time to arrange his residence. The Lenoncours were splendidly generous to the Count, who recovered his strength through several months' stay with them, making every effort to disguise his sufferings during this first interval of peace. The Lenoncours had lost their enormous possessions. So far as name was concerned, the Comte de Mortsauf was a suitable match for their daughter; and Mlle. de Lenoncourt, far from being averse to marrying a man of five-and-thirty, old and ailing for his age, seemed quite content. Her marriage would allow her to live with her aunt, the Duchesse de Verneuil (sister to the Prince de Blamant-Chauvry), who was a second mother to the girl.

As the intimate friend of the Duchesse de Bourbon, Mme. de Verneuil was one of a saintly circle whose soul was M. de Saint-Martin, born in Touraine, and known as *Le Philosophe Inconnu* (the unrecognized philosopher). The disciples of this philosopher practiced the virtues inculcated by the lofty speculations of mystical Illuminism. This doctrine gives a key to the supernal worlds, accounts for life by a series of transmigrations through which man makes his way to sublime destinies, releases duty from its degradation by the law, views the woes of life with the placid fortitude of the Quaker, and enjoins contempt of pain, by infusing a mysterious maternal regard for the angel within us which we must bear up to heaven. It is Stoicism looking for a future life. Earnest prayer and pure love are the elements of this creed, which, born in the Catholicism of the Roman Church, reverts to the bosom of Primitive Christianity.

Mlle. de Lenoncourt remained attached, however, to the Apostolic Church, to which her aunt was equally faithful. Cruelly tried by the storms of the Revolution, the Duchesse de Verneuil had, towards the close of her life, assumed a hue of impassioned piety which overflowed into the soul of her beloved niece with "the light of heavenly love and the oil of spiritual joy," to use the words of Saint-Martin. This man of peace and virtuous learning was several times the Countess's guest at Clochegourde after her aunt's death; to her he had been a constant visitor. When staying at Clochegourde, Saint-Martin could superintend the printing of his latest works by Letourney of Tours.

Mme. de Verneuil, with the inspiration of wisdom that comes to old women who have experienced the storms of life, gave Clochegourde to the young wife that she might have a home of her own. With the good grace of old people—which, when they are gracious, is perfection—she surrendered the whole house to her niece, reserving only one room, over that she had formerly used, which was taken by the Countess. Her almost sudden death cast a shroud over the joys of the united household, and left a permanent tinge of sadness on Clochegourde as well as on the young wife's superstitious soul. The early days of her married life in Touraine were



to the Countess the only period, not indeed of happiness, but of light-heartedness in all her life.

After the miseries of his life in exile, M. de Mortsau, thankful to foresee a sheltered existence in the future, went through a sort of healing of the spirit; he inhaled in this valley the intoxicating fragrance of blossoming hope. Being obliged to consider ways and means, he threw himself into agricultural enterprise, and at first found some delight in it; but Jacques's birth came like a lightning stroke, blighting the present and the future; the physician pronounced that the child could not live. The Count carefully concealed this sentence of doom from his wife; then he himself consulted a doctor, and had none but crushing answers, confirmed as to their purport by Madeleine's birth.

These two events, and a sort of inward conviction as to the inevitable end, added to the Count's ill-health. His name extinct; his young wife, pure and blameless but unhappy in her marriage, doomed to the anxieties of motherhood without knowing its joys,—all this *humus* of his past life, filled with the germs of fresh sufferings, fell on his heart and crowned his misery.

The Countess read the past in the present, and foresaw the future. Though there is nothing so difficult as to make a man happy who feels where he has failed, the Countess attempted the task worthy of an angel. In one day she became a Stoic. After descending into the abyss whence she could still see the heavens, she devoted herself, for one man, to the mission which a Sister of Charity undertakes for the sake of all; and to reconcile him with himself, she forgave him what he could not forgive himself. The Count grew avaricious, she accepted the consequent privations; he dreaded being imposed upon, as men do whose knowledge of the world has filled them with repulsions, and she resigned herself to solitude and to his distrust of men without a murmur; she used all a woman's wiles to make him wish for what was right, and he thus credited himself with ideas, and enjoyed in his home the pleasures of superiority which he could not have known elsewhere.

Finally, having inured herself to the path of married life,

she determined never to leave her home at Clochegourde; for she perceived in her husband a hysterical nature whose eccentricities, in a neighborhood so full of envy and gossip, might be interpreted to the injury of their children. Thus nobody had a suspicion of M. de Mortsauf's incapacity and aberrations; she had clothed the ruin with a thick hanging of ivy. The Count's uncertain temper, not so much discontented as malcontent, found in his wife a soft and soothing bed on which it might repose, its secret sufferings alleviated by cooling dews.

This sketch is a mere outline of the facts repeated by M. de Chessel under the promptings of private spite. His experience of the world had enabled him to unravel some of the mysteries lurking at Clochegourde. But though Mme. de Mortsauf's sublime attitude might deceive the world, it could not cheat the alert wits of love.

When I found myself alone in my little bedroom, an intuition of the truth made me start up in bed. I could not endure to be at Frapesle when I might be gazing at the windows of her room. I dressed myself, stole downstairs, and got out of the house by a side door in a tower where there was a spiral stair. The fresh night air composed my spirit. I crossed the Indre by the Moulin-Rouge bridge, and presently got into the heaven-sent little boat opposite Clochegourde, where a light shone in the end window towards Azay.

Here I fell back on my old dreams, but peaceful now, and soothed by the warbling of the songster of lovers' nights and the single note of the reed warbler. Ideas stole through my brain like ghosts, sweeping away the clouds which till now had darkened the future. My mind and sense alike were under the spell. With what passion did my longing go forth to her! How many times did I repeat, like a madman, "Will she be mine?"

If, during the last few days, the universe had expanded before me, now, in one night, it gained a center. All my will, all my ambitions were bound up in her; I longed to be all I might for her sake, and to fill and heal her aching heart. How lovely was that night spent below her window, in the

midst of murmurous waters, plashing over the mill-wheels, and broken by the sound of the clock at Saché as it told the hours. In that night, so full of radiance, when that starry flower illumined my life, I plighted my soul to her with the faith of the hapless Castilian Knight whom we laugh at in Cervantes—the faith of the beginnings of love.

At the first streak of dawn in the sky, the first piping bird, I fled to the park of Frapesle; no early country yokel saw me, no one suspected my escapade, and I slept till the bell rang for breakfast.

Notwithstanding the heat, when breakfast was over I went down to the meadow to see the Indre and its islets once more, the valley and its downs of which I professed myself an ardent admirer; but, with a swiftness of foot which might defy that of a runaway horse, I went back to my boat, my willows, and my Clochegourde. All was still and quivering, as the country is at noon. The motionless foliage was darkly defined against the blue sky; such insects as live in sunshine—green dragon-flies and iridescent flies—hovered round the ash-trees and over the reeds; the herds chewed the cud in the shade, the red earth glowed in the vineyards, and snakes wriggled over the banks. What a change in the landscape that I had left so cool and coy before going to sleep!

On a sudden I leaped out of the punt, and went up the road to come down behind Clochegourde, for I fancied I had seen the Count come out. I was not mistaken; he was skirting a hedge, going no doubt towards a gate opening on to the Azay road by the side of the river.

“How are you this morning, M. le Comte?”

He looked at me with a pleased expression. He did not often hear himself thus addressed.

“Quite well,” said he. “You must be very fond of the country to walk out in this heat?”

“Was I not sent here to live in the open air?”

“Well, then, will you come and see them reaping my rye?”

“With pleasure,” said I. “But I am, I must confess to you, deplorably ignorant. I do not know rye from wheat,

or a poplar from an aspen; I know nothing of field-work, or of the ways of tilling the land."

"Well, then, come along," said he gleefully, turning back by the hedge. "Come by the little upper gate."

He walked along inside the hedge, and I outside.

"You will never learn anything from M. de Chessel," said he; "he is much too fine a gentleman to trouble himself beyond looking through his steward's accounts."

So he showed me his yards and outbuildings, his flower-garden, orchards, and kitchen-gardens. Finally, he led me along the avenue of acacias and ailanthus on the river bank, where, at the further end, I saw Mme. de Mortsauf and the two children.

A woman looks charming under the play of the frittered, quivering tracery of leaves. Somewhat surprised, no doubt, by my early visit, she did not move, knowing that we should go to her. The Count bid me admire the view of the valley, which, from thence, wore quite a different aspect from any I had seen from the heights. You might have thought yourself in a corner of Switzerland. The meadow-land, channeled by the brooks that tumble into the Indre, stretches far into the distance, and is lost in mist. On the side towards Montbazon spreads a wide extent of verdure; everywhere else the eye is checked by hills, clumps of trees, and rocks.

We hastened our steps to greet Mme. de Mortsauf, who suddenly dropped the book in which Madeleine was reading, and took Jacques on her knee, in a fit of spasmodic coughing.

"Why, what is the matter?" said the Count, turning pale.

"He has a relaxed throat," said the mother, who did not seem to see me; "it will be nothing."

She was supporting his head and his back, and from her eyes shot two rays that infused life into the poor feeble boy.

"You are extraordinarily rash," said the Count sharply; "you expose him to a chill from the river, and let him sit on a stone bench!"

"But, father, the bench is burning," cried Madeleine.

"They were stifling up above," said the Countess.

"Women will always be in the right!" said he, turning to me.

To avoid encouraging or offending him by a look, I gazed at Jacques, who complained of a pain in his throat, and his mother carried him away. As she went, she could hear her husband say—

“When a mother has such sickly children, she ought to know how to take care of them.”

Hideously unjust, but his self-conceit prompted him to justify himself at his wife’s expense.

The Countess flew on, up slopes and steps; she disappeared through the glass door.

M. de Mortsauf had seated himself on the bench, his head bent, lost in thought; my position was intolerable; he neither looked at me nor spoke. Good-by to the walk during which I meant to make such way in his good graces. I cannot remember ever in my life to have spent a more horrible quarter of an hour. I was bathed in perspiration as I considered—

“Shall I leave him? Shall I stay?”

How many gloomy thoughts must have filled his brain to make him forget to go and inquire how Jacques was! Suddenly he rose and came up to me. We turned together to look at the smiling scene.

“We will put off our walk till another day, M. le Comte,” I said gently.

“Nay, let us go,” said he. “I am, unfortunately, used to see such attacks—and I would give my life without a regret to save the child’s.”

“Jacques is better now, my dear; he is asleep,” said the golden voice. Mme. de Mortsauf appeared at the end of the walk; she had come back without rancor or bitterness, and she returned my bow. “I am pleased to see that you like Clochegourde,” she said to me.

“Would you like me to go on horseback to fetch M. Deslandes, my dear?” said he, with an evident desire to win forgiveness for his injustice.

“Do not be anxious,” replied she. “Jacques did not sleep last night, that is all. The child is very nervous; he had a bad dream, and I spent the time telling him stories to send him to sleep again. His cough is entirely nervous.

I have soothed it with a gum lozenge, and he has fallen asleep."

"Poor dear!" said he, taking her hand in both his, and looking at her with moistened eyes. "I knew nothing of it."

"Why worry you about trifles? Go and look at your rye. You know that if you are not on the spot, the farmers will let gleaners who do not belong to the place clear the fields before the sheaves are carried."

"I am going to take my first lesson in farming, madame," said I.

"You have come to a good master," replied she, looking at the Count, whose lips were pursed into the prim smile of satisfaction commonly known as *la bouche en cœur*.

Not till two months later did I know that she had spent that night in dreadful anxiety, fearing that her son had the croup. And I was in the punt, softly lulled by dreams of love, fancying that from her window she might see me adoring the light of the taper which shone on her brow furrowed by mortal fears.

As we reached the gate, the Count said in a voice full of emotion, "Mme. de Mortsauf is an angel!"

The words staggered me. I knew the family but slightly as yet, and the natural remorse that comes over a youthful soul in such circumstances cried out to me—

"What right have you to disturb this perfect peace?"

The Count, enchanted to have for his audience a youth over whom he could so cheaply triumph, began talking of the future prospects of France under the return of the Bourbons. We chatted discursively, and I was greatly surprised at the strangely childish things he said. He was ignorant of facts as well proven as geometry; he was suspicious of well-informed persons; he had no belief in superiority; he laughed at progress, not perhaps without reason; and I found in him a vast number of sensitive chords compelling me to take so much care not to wound him that a long conversation was a labor to the mind. When I had thus laid a finger on his failings, I felt my way with as much pliancy as the Countess showed in coaxing them. At a later stage of my life I should undoubtedly have fretted him; but

I was as timid as a child, and thinking that I myself knew nothing, or that men of experience knew everything, I was amazed at the wonders worked at Clochegourde by this patient husbandman. I heard his plans with admiration. Finally, —a piece of involuntary flattery which won me the good gentleman's affections,—I envied him this pretty estate so beautifully situated, as an earthly paradise far superior to Frapesle.

"Frapesle," said I, "is a massive piece of plate, but Clochegourde is a casket of precious gems."

A speech he constantly repeated, quoting me as the author.

"Well," said he, "before we came here it was a wilderness."

I was all ears when he talked of his crops and nursery plantations. New to a country life, I overwhelmed him with questions as to the price of things and the processes of agriculture, and he seemed delighted to have to tell me so much.

"What on earth do they teach you?" he asked in surprise.

And that very first day, on going in, he said to his wife—

"M. Félix is a charming young fellow."

In the afternoon I wrote to my mother to tell her I should remain at Frapesle, and begged her to send me clothes and linen.

Knowing nothing of the great revolution that was going on, and of the influence it was to exert over my destinies, I supposed that I should return to Paris to finish my studies, and the law-schools would not reopen till early in November; so I had two months and a half before me.

During the first days of my stay I tried in vain to attach myself to the Count, and it was a time of painful shocks. I detected in this man a causeless irritability and a swiftness to act in cases that were hopeless which frightened me. Now and then there were sudden resuscitations of the brave gentleman who had fought so well under Condé, parabolic flashes of a will which, in a day of critical moment, might tear through policy like a bursting shell, and which in some opportunity for resolution and courage may make an Elbée, a Bonchamp, a Charette of a man condemned to live on his acres. The mere mention of certain possibilities would make

his nose quiver and his brow clear, while his eyes flashed lightnings that at once died out. I feared lest M. de Mortsauf, if he should read the language of my eyes, might kill me on the spot.

At this period of my life I was only tender; will, which affects a man so strangely, was but just dawning in me. My vehement longing had given me a swiftly responsive sensitiveness that was like a thrill of fear. I did not tremble at the prospect of a struggle, but I did not want to die till I had known the happiness of reciprocated love. My difficulties and my desires grew in parallel lines.

How can I describe my feelings? I was a prey to heart-rending perplexities. I hoped for a chance, I watched for it; I made friends with the children, and won them to love me; I tried to identify myself with the interests of the household.

By degrees the Count was less on his guard in my presence; then I learnt to know his sudden changes of temper, his fits of utter, causeless dejection, his gusts of rebelliousness, his bitter and harsh complaining, his impulses of controlled madness, his childish whining, his groans as of a man in despair, his unexpected rages. Moral nature differs from physical nature, inasmuch as nothing in it is final. The intensity of effect is in proportion to the character acted on, or to the ideas that may be associated with an action. My continuing at Clochegourde, my whole future life depended on this fantastic will.

I could never express to you the anguish that weighed on my soul—as ready at that time to expand as to shrink—when on going in I said to myself, “How will he receive me?” What anxious fears crushed my heart when I descried a storm lowering on that snow-crowned brow! I was perpetually on the alert. Thus I was a slave to this man’s tyranny, and my own torments enabled me to understand those of Mme. de Mortsauf.

We began to exchange glances of intelligence, and my tears would sometimes rise when she repressed hers. Thus the Countess and I tested each other through sorrow. I made many discoveries in the course of the first six weeks—



forty days of real annoyance, of silent joys, of hopes now engulfed and now rising to the top.

One evening I found her piously meditative as she looked at a sunset, which crimsoned the heights with so voluptuous a blush, the valley spread below it like a bed, that it was impossible not to understand the voice of this eternal Song of Songs by which Nature bids her creatures love. Was the girl dreaming of illusions now flown? Was the woman feeling the pangs of some secret comparison? I fancied I saw in her languid attitude a favorable opening for a first avowal. I said to her—

“Some days are so hard to live through.”

“You have read my mind,” replied she. “But how?”

“We have so many points of contact,” said I. “Are we not both of the privileged few, keen to suffer and to enjoy—in whom every sensitive fiber thrills in unison to produce an echoing chord of feeling, and whose nervous system dwells in constant harmony with the first principle of things? Such beings, placed in a discordant medium, suffer torture, just as their enjoyment rises to ecstasy when they meet with ideas, sensations, or persons that they find sympathetic.

“And for us there is a third condition, of which the woes are known only to souls suffering from the same malady, and endowed with brotherly intelligence. We are capable of having impressions that are neither pleasure nor pain. Then an expressive instrument, gifted with life, is stirred in a void within us, is impassioned without an object, gives forth sounds without melody, utters words that die in the silence—a dreadful contradiction in souls that rebel against the uselessness of a vacuum; a terrible sport in which all our power is spent without nutrition, like blood from some internal wound. Our emotion flows in torrents, leaving us unutterably weak, in a speechless dejection for which the confessional has no ear.—Have I not expressed the sufferings we both are familiar with?”

She shivered, and still gazing at the sunset, she replied—

“How do you, who are so young, know these things? Were you once a woman?”

"Ah!" said I, with some agitation, "my childhood was like one long illness?"

"I hear Madeleine coughing," said she, hastily leaving me.

The Countess had seen me constant in my attentions to her, without taking offense, for two reasons. In the first place, she was as pure as a child, and her thoughts never wandered to evil. And then I amused the Count; I was food for this lion without claws or mane. For I had hit on a pretext for my visits which was plausible to all. I could not play backgammon; M. de Mortsauf offered to teach me, and I accepted.

At the moment when this bargain was made, the Countess could not help giving me a pitying look, as much as to say, "Well, you are rushing into the wolf's jaws!"

If I had failed to understand this at first, by the third day I knew to what I had committed myself. My patience, which as a result of my child-life is inexhaustible, was matured during this time of discipline. To the Count it was a real joy to be cruelly sarcastic when I failed to practice some rule or principle he had explained to me; if I paused to reflect, he complained of my slow play; if I played quickly, he hated to be hurried; if I left blots, while taking advantage of it, he said I was too hasty. It was the despotism of a schoolmaster, the bullying of the cane, of which I can only give you a notion by comparing myself to Epictetus made a slave to a malicious child.

When we played for money, his constant winnings gave him mean and degrading joy; then a word from his wife made up to me for everything, and brought him back to a sense of decency and politeness. But ere long I fell into the torments of a fiery furnace I had not foreseen; at this rate my pocket-money was melting.

Though the Count always remained between his wife and me till I took my leave, sometimes at a late hour, I always hoped to find a moment when I might steal into her heart; but in order to attain that hour, watched for with the painful patience of a sportsman, I saw that I must persevere in these weariful games, through which I endured

mental misery, and which were winning away all my money!

Many a time had we sat in silence, watching an effect of the sun on the meadows, of the clouds in a gray sky, the blue misty hills, or the quivering moonbeams on the gem-like play of the river, without uttering a word beyond—

“What a beautiful night!”

“Madame, the night is a woman.”

“And what peace!”

“Yes; it is impossible to be altogether unhappy here.”

At this reply she returned to her worsted-work. I had in fact understood the yearnings of her inmost self stirred by an affection that insisted on its rights.

Without money my evenings were at an end. I wrote to my mother to send me some; my mother scolded me, and would give me none for a week. To whom could I apply? And it was a matter of life or death to me!

Thus at the very beginning of my first great happiness I again felt the sufferings which had always pursued me; in Paris, at school, I had evaded them by melancholy abstinence, my woes were only negative; at Frapesle they were active; I now knew that longing to steal, those dreamed-of crimes and horrible frenzies which blast the soul, and which we are bound to stifle or lose all self-respect. My remembrance of the miserable reflections, the anguish inflicted on me by my mother's parsimony, have given me that holy indulgence for young men which those must feel who, without having fallen, have stood on the edge of the gulf and sounded the abyss. Though my honesty, watered with cold sweats, stood firm at those moments when the waters of life part and show the stony depths of its bed, whenever human justice draws her terrible sword on a man's neck, I say to myself, “Penal laws were made by those who never knew want.”

In this dire extremity I found in M. de Chessel's library a treatise on backgammon, and this I studied; then my host was good enough to give me a few lessons. Under milder tuition I made some progress, and could apply the rules and calculations which I learnt by heart. In a few days I was able to beat my master. But when I won he waxed furious;

his eyes glared like a tiger's, his face twitched, his brows worked as I never saw any other's work. His fractiousness was like that of a spoilt child. Sometimes he would fling the dice across the room, rage and stamp, bite the dice-box, and abuse me. But this violence had to be stopped. As soon as I could play a good game, I disposed of the battle as I pleased. I arranged it so that we should come out nearly even at the end, allowing him to win at the beginning of the evening, and restoring the balance in the later games.

The end of the world would have amazed the Count less than his pupil's sudden proficiency; but, in fact, he never perceived it. The regular result of our play was a novelty that bewildered his mind.

"My poor brain is tired, no doubt," he would say. "You always win at the finish, because by that time I have exhausted my powers."

The Countess, who knew the game, detected my purpose from the first, and saw in it an evidence of immense affection. These details can only be appreciated by those to whom the extreme difficulty of backgammon is known. How much this trifle betrayed! But love, like God as depicted by Bossuet, regards the poor man's cup of water, the struggle of the soldier who dies inglorious, as far above the most profitable victories.

The Countess gave me one of those looks of silent gratitude that overpower a youthful heart: she bestowed on me such a glance as she reserved for her children. From that thrice-blessed evening she always looked at me when she spoke to me.

I could never find words for my state of mind when I left. My soul had absorbed my body. I weighed nothing, I did not walk—I floated. I felt within me still that look that had bathed me in glory, just as her "Good-night, monsieur," had echoed in my soul like the harmonies of the "O filii, O filiæ!" of the Easter benediction. I was born to new life. I was something to her, then!

I slept in wrappings of purple. Flames danced before my closed eyes, chasing each other in the dark like the pretty bright sparks that run over charred paper. And in my dreams her voice seemed something tangible—an atmosphere

that lapped me in light and fragrance, a melody that lulled my spirit.

Next day her welcome conveyed the full expression of the feelings she bestowed on me, and thenceforth I knew every secret of her tones.

That day was to be one of the most noteworthy of my life. After dinner we went for a walk on the downs, and up to a common where nothing would grow; the soil was strong and dry, with no vegetable mold. There were, however, a few oaks, and some bushes covered with sloes; but instead of grass, the ground was carpeted with curled brown lichen, bright in the rays of the setting sun, and slippery under foot. I held Madeleine by the hand to keep her from falling, and Mme. de Mortsauf gave Jacques her arm. The Count, who led the way, suddenly struck the earth with his stick, and turning round, exclaimed in a terrible tone—

“Such has my life been!—Oh, before I knew you,” he added, with an apologetic glance at his wife. But it was too late, the Countess had turned pale. What woman would not have staggered under such a blow?

“What delightful perfumes reach us here, and what wonderful effects of light!” cried I. “I should like to own this common; I might perhaps find riches if I dug into it; but the most certain advantage would be living near you. But who would not pay highly for a view so soothing to the eye of that winding river in which the soul may bathe among ash-trees and birch. That shows how tastes differ! To you this spot of land is a common; to me it is a paradise.”

She thanked me with a look.

“Rhodomontade!” said he in a bitter tone. Then, interrupting himself, he said, “Do you hear the bells of Azay? I can positively hear the bells.”

Mme. de Mortsauf glanced at me with an expression of alarm, Madeleine clutched my hand.

“Shall we go home and play a hit?” said I. “The rattle of the dice will hinder you from hearing the bells.”

We returned to Clochegourde, talking at intervals. When we went into the drawing-room we sat in indefinable indecision.

The Count had sunk into an armchair, lost in thought, and undisturbed by his wife, who knew the symptoms of his malady, and could foresee an attack. I was not less silent. She did not bid me leave, perhaps because she thought that a game of backgammon would amuse the Count and scare away this dreadful nervous irritation, for its outbreaks half killed her.

Nothing was more difficult than to persuade the Count to play his game of backgammon, though he always longed for it. Like a mincing coquette, he had to be entreated and urged, so as not to seem under any obligation, perhaps because he felt that he was. If, at the end of some interesting conversation, I forgot to go through my *salamelek*, he was sulky, sharp, and offensive, and showed his annoyance by contradicting everything that was said. Then, warned by his fractiousness, I would propose a game, and he would play the coquette.

"It was too late," he would say, "and besides, I did not really care for it." In short, no end of airs and graces, like a woman whose real wishes you cannot at last be sure of. I was humble, and besought him to give me practice in a science so easily forgotten for lack of exercise.

On this occasion I had to affect the highest spirits to persuade him to play. He complained of giddiness that hindered his calculations, his brain was crushed in a vice, he had a singing in his ears, he was suffocating, and sighed and groaned. At last he consented to come to the table. Mme. de Mortsauif then left us to put the children to bed and to read prayers for the household. All went well during her absence; I contrived that M. de Mortsauif should win, and his success restored his good-humor. The sudden transition from a state of depression, in which he had given utterance to the most gloomy anticipations for himself, to this joviality like that of a drunken man, and to crazy, irrational mirth, distressed and terrified me. I had never seen him so frankly and unmistakably beside himself. Our intimacy had borne fruit; he was no longer on his guard with me. Day by day he tried to involve me in his tyranny, and find in me fresh food for his humors—for it really would seem that mental

disorders are living things with appetites and instincts, and a craving to extend the limits of their dominion as a landowner seeks to enlarge his borders.

The Countess came down again, and drew near the backgammon table for a better light on her work, but she sat down to her frame with ill-disguised apprehension. An unlucky move which I could not avoid changed the Count's face; from cheerful it became gloomy, from purple it turned yellow, and his eyes wandered. Then came another blow which I could neither foresee nor make good. M. de Mortsauf threw a fatally bad number which ruined him. He started up, threw the table over me and the lamp on the ground, struck his fist on the console, and leaped—for I cannot say he walked—up and down the room. The rush of abuse, oaths, and ejaculations that he poured out was enough to make one think that he was possessed, according to mediæval belief. Imagine my position.

"Go out into the garden," said she, pressing my hand.

I went without the Count's noticing that I was gone.

From the terrace, whither I slowly made my way, I could hear his loud tones, and groans coming from his bedroom, adjoining the dining-room. Above the tempest I could also hear the voice of an angel, audible now and then like the song of the nightingale when the storm is passing over. I wandered up and down under the acacias on that exquisite night late in August, waiting for the Countess. She would come; her manner had promised it. For some days an explanation had been in the air between us, and must inevitably come at the first word that should unseal the overfull well in our hearts. What bashfulness retarded the hour of our perfect understanding? Perhaps she loved, as I did, the thrill, almost like the stress of fear, which quenches emotion at those moments when we hold down the gushing overflow of life, when we are as shy of revealing our inmost soul as a maiden bride of unveiling to the husband she loves. The accumulation of our thoughts had magnified this first and necessary confession on both sides.

An hour stole away. I was sitting on the brick parapet when the sound of her footstep, mingling with the rustle of

her light dress, fluttered the evening air. It was one of the sensations at which the heart stands still.

"M. de Mortsauf is asleep," said she. "When he has one of these attacks I give him a cup of tea made of poppy-heads, and the crisis is rare enough for the simple remedy always to take effect.—Monsieur," she went on, with a change of tone to the most persuasive key, "an unfortunate accident has put you in possession of secrets which have hitherto been carefully kept; promise me to bury in your heart every memory of this scene. Do this for my sake, I beg of you. I do not ask you to swear it; the simple *Yes* of a man of honor will amply satisfy me."

"Need I even say *Yes*?" I asked. "Have we failed to understand each other?"

"Do not form an unjust opinion of M. de Mortsauf from seeing the result of much suffering endured in exile," she went on. "He will have entirely forgotten by to-morrow all he said to you, and you will find him quite kind and affectionate."

"Nay, madame," said I, "you need not justify the Count. I will do exactly what you will. I would this instant throw myself into the Indre if I could thus make a new man of M. de Mortsauf, and give you a life of happiness. The only thing I cannot do is to alter my opinion, nothing is more essentially a part of me. I would give my life for you; I cannot sacrifice my conscience; I may refuse to listen to it, but can I hinder its speaking? Now, in my opinion, M. de Mortsauf is——"

"I quite understand you," she said, interrupting me to mitigate the idea of insanity by softening the expression. "The Count is as nervous as a lady with the megrims; but it occurs only at long intervals, at most once a year, when the heat is greatest. How much evil the emigration brought in its train! How many noble lives were wrecked! He, I am sure, would have been a distinguished officer and an honor to his country——"

"I know it," I replied, interrupting in my turn, to show her that it was vain to try to deceive me.

She paused and laid a hand on my brow.



"Who has thus thrown you into our midst? Has God intended me to find a help in you, a living friendship to lean upon?" she went on, firmly grasping my hand. "For you are kind and generous——"

She looked up to heaven as if to invoke some visible evidence that should confirm her secret hopes; then she bent her eyes on me. Magnetized by that gaze which shed her soul into mine, I failed in tact by every rule of worldly guidance; but to some souls is not such precipitancy a magnanimous haste to meet danger, an eagerness to prevent disaster and dread of a misfortune that may never come; is it not more often the abrupt question of heart to heart, a blow struck to find out whether they ring in unison?

Many thoughts flashed through me like light, and counseled me to wash out the stain that soiled my innocence even at the moment when I hoped for full initiation.

"Before going any further," said I, in a voice quivering from my heartbeats, audible in the deep silence, "allow me to purify one memory of the past——"

"Be silent," said she hastily, and laying a finger on my lips for an instant. She looked at me loftily, like a woman who stands too high for slander to reach her, and said in a broken voice, "I know what you allude to—the first and last and only insult ever offered me!—Never speak of that ball. Though as a Christian I have forgiven you, the woman still smarts under it."

"Do not be less merciful than God," said I, my eyelashes retaining the tears that rose to my eyes.

"I have a right to be more severe; I am weaker," replied she.

"But hear me," I cried, with a sort of childish indignation, "even if it be for the first and last and only time in your life."

"Well," said she, "speak then! Otherwise you will fancy that I am afraid to hear you."

I felt that this hour was unique in our lives, and I told her, in a way to command belief, that every woman at that ball had been as indifferent to me as every other I had hitherto seen; but that when I saw her—I who had spent my life in

study, whose spirit was so far from bold—I had been swept away by a sort of frenzy which could only be condemned by those who had never known it; that the heart of man had never been so overflowing with such desire as no living being can resist, and which conquers all things, even death——

“And scorn?” said she, interrupting me.

“What, you scorned me?” said I.

“Talk no more of these things,” said she.

“Nay, let us talk of them,” replied I, in the excitement of superhuman anguish. “It concerns my whole being, my unknown life; it is a secret you must hear, or else I must die of despair!—And does it not concern you too—you who, without knowing it, are the Lady in whose hand shines the crown held out to the conqueror in the lists?”

I told her the story of my childhood and youth, not as I have related it to you, calmly judged from a distance, but in the words of a young man whose wounds are still bleeding. My voice rang like the ax of the woodman in a forest. The dead years fell crashing down before it, and the long misery that had crowned them with leafless boughs. In fevered words I described to her a thousand odious details that I have spared you. I displayed the treasury of my splendid hopes, the virgin gold of my desires, a burning heart kept hot under the Alps of ice piled up through a perpetual winter. And then, when, crushed by the burden of my griefs uttered with the fire of an Isaiah, I waited for a word from the woman who had heard me with a downcast head, she lightened the darkness with a look, and vivified the worlds earthly and divine by one single sentence.

“Our childhood was the same,” said she, showing me a face bright with the halo of martyrdom.

After a pause, during which our souls were wedded by the same consoling thought, “Then I was not the only one to suffer!” the Countess told me, in the tones she kept for her children, how luckless she had been as a girl when the boys were dead. She explained the difference, made by her condition as a girl always at her mother’s skirt, between her miseries and those of a boy flung into the world of school. My isolation had been paradise in comparison with the grind-

ing millstone under which her spirit was perennially bruised, until the day when her true mother, her devoted aunt, had saved her by rescuing her from the torture of which she described the ever-new terrors. It was a course of those indescribable goading pricks that are intolerable to a nervous nature which can face a direct thrust, but dies daily under the sword of Damocles—a generous impulse quashed by a stern command; a kiss coldly accepted; silence first enjoined and then found fault with; tears repressed that lay heavy on her heart; in short, all the petty tyranny of convent discipline hidden from the eyes of the world behind a semblance of proud and sentimental motherhood. Her mother was vain of her and boasted of her; but she paid dearly afterwards for the praise bestowed only for the glory of her teacher. When, by dint of docility and sweetness, she fancied she had softened her mother's heart, and opened her own, the tyrant armed herself with her confessions. A spy would have been less cowardly and treacherous.

All her girlish pleasures and festivals had cost her dear, for she was scolded for having enjoyed them as much as for a fault. The lessons of her admirable education had never been given with love, but always with cruel irony. She owed her mother no grudge, she only blamed herself for loving her less than she feared her. Perhaps, the angel thought, this severity had really been necessary. Had it not prepared her for her present life?

As I listened to her, I felt as though the harp of Job, from which I had struck some wild chords, was now touched by Christian fingers, and responded with the chanted liturgy of the Virgin at the foot of the Cross.

"We dwelt in the same sphere," I cried, "before meeting here, you coming from the East, and I from the West."

She shook her head with desperate agitation: "The East is for you, and the West for me," said she. "You will live happy, I shall die of grief! Men make the conditions of their life themselves; my lot is cast once for all. No power can break the ponderous chain to which a wife is bound by a ring of gold, the emblem of her purity."

Feeling now that we were twins of the same nurture, she

could not conceive of semi-confidences between sister souls that had drunk of the same spring. After the natural sigh of a guileless heart opening for the first time, she told me the story of the early days of her married life, her first disillusionment, all the renewal of her sorrows. She, like me, had gone through those trivial experiences which are so great to spirits whose limpid nature is shaken through and through by the slightest shock, as a stone flung into a lake stirs the depths as well as the surface.

When she married, she had some savings, the little treasure which represents the happy hours, the thousand trifles a young wife may wish for; one day of dire need she had generously given the whole sum to her husband, not telling him that these were not gold pieces, but remembrances; he had never taken any account of it; he did not feel himself her debtor. Nor had she seen in return for her treasure, sunk in the sleeping waters of oblivion, the moistened eye which pays every debt, and is to a generous soul like a perpetual gem whose rays sparkle in the darkest day.

And she had gone on from sorrow to sorrow. M. de Mortsauf would forget to give her money for housekeeping; he woke up as from a dream when she asked for it, after overcoming a woman's natural shyness; never once had he spared her this bitter experience! Then what terrors had beset her at the moment when this worn-out man had first shown symptoms of his malady! The first outbreak of his frenzied rage had completely crushed her. What miserable meditations must she have known before she understood that her husband—the impressive figure that presides over a woman's whole life—was a nonentity! What anguish had come on her after the birth of her two children! What a shock on seeing the scarcely living infants! What courage she must have had to say to herself, "I will breathe life into them; they shall be born anew day by day!" And then the despair of finding an obstacle in the heart and hand whence a wife looks for help!

She had seen this expanse of woes stretching before her, a thorny wilderness, after every surmounted difficulty. From the top of each rock she had discovered new deserts to cross,

till the day when she really knew her husband, knew her children's constitution, and the land she was to dwell in; till the day when, like the boy taken by Napoleon from the tender care of home, she had inured her feet to tramp through mire and snow, inured her forehead to flying bullets, and broken herself entirely to the passive obedience of a soldier. All these things, which I abridge for you, she related in their gloomy details, with all their adjuncts of cruel incidents, of conjugal defeats, and fruitless efforts.

"In short," she said in conclusion, "only a residence here of months would give you a notion of all the troubles the improvements at Clochegourde cost me, all the weary coaxing to persuade him to do the thing that is most useful for his interests. What childish malice possesses him whenever anything I may have advised is not an immediate success! How delighted he is to proclaim himself in the right! What patience I need when I hear continual complaints while I am killing myself to clear each hour of weeds, to perfume the air he breathes, to strew sand and flowers on the paths he has beset with stones! My reward is this dreadful burden—" "I am dying; life is a curse to me!"

"If he is so fortunate as to find visitors at home, all is forgotten; he is gracious and polite. Why cannot he be the same to his family? I cannot account for this want of loyalty in a man who is sometimes chivalrous. He is capable of going off without a word, all the way to Paris, to get me a dress, as he did the other day for that ball. Miserly as he is in his housekeeping, he would be lavish for me if I would allow it. It ought to be just the other way; I want nothing, and the house expenses are heavy. In my anxiety to make him happy, and forgetting that I might be a mother, I perhaps gave him the habit of regarding me as his victim, whereas with a little flattery I might still manage him like a child if I would stoop to play so mean a part! But the interests of the household make it necessary that I should be as calm and austere as a statue of Justice; and yet I too have a tender and effusive soul."

"But why," said I, "do you not avail yourself of your influence to be the mistress and guide him?"

"If I alone were concerned, I could never defy the stolid silence with which for hours he will oppose sound arguments, nor could I answer his illogical remarks—the reasoning of a child. I have no courage against weakness or childishness; they may hit me, and I shall make no resistance. I might meet force with force, but I have no power against those I pity. If I were required to compel Madeleine to do something that would save her life, we should die together. Pity relaxes all my fibers and weakens my sinews. And the violent shocks of the past ten years have undermined me; my nervous force, so often attacked, is sometimes deliquescent, nothing can restore it; the strength that weathered those storms is sometimes wanting. Yes, sometimes I am conquered.

"For want of rest and of sea-bathing, which would give tone to my whole system, I shall be worn out. M. de Mortsauf will kill me, and he will die of my death."

"Why do you not leave Clochegourde for a few months? Why should not you and the children go to the sea?"

"In the first place, M. de Mortsauf would feel himself lost if I left him. Though he will not recognize the situation, he is aware of his state. The man and the invalid are at war in him, two different natures, whose antagonism accounts for many eccentricities. And indeed he has every reason to dread it; if I were absent, everything here would go wrong. You have seen, no doubt, that I am a mother perpetually on the watch to guard her brood against the hawk that hovers over them; a desperate task, increased by the cares required by M. de Mortsauf, whose perpetual cry is, 'Where is madame?' But this is nothing. I am at the same time Jacques's tutor and Madeleine's governess. This again is nothing. I am steward and bookkeeper. You will some day know the full meaning of my words when I say that the management of an estate is here the most exhausting toil. We have but a small income in money, and our farms are worked on a system of half-profits which requires incessant superintendence. We ourselves must sell our corn, our beasts, and every kind of crop. Our competitors are our own farmers who agree with the purchasers over their wine at

the tavern, and fix a price after being before us in the market.

"I should tire you out if I were to tell you all the thousand difficulties of our husbandry. With all my vigilance, I cannot keep our farmers from manuring their lands from our middens; I can neither go to make sure that our bailiffs do not agree with them to cheat us when the crops are divided, nor can I know the best time to sell. And if you think how little memory M. de Mortsaufr can boast of, and what trouble it costs me to induce him to attend to business, you will understand what a load I have to carry, and the impossibility of setting it down even for a moment. If I went away, we should be ruined. No one would listen to his orders; indeed, they are generally contradictory; then nobody is attached to him; he finds fault too much, and is too despotic; and, like all weak natures, he is too ready to listen to his inferiors, and so fails to inspire the affection that binds families together. If I left the house, not a servant would stay a week.

"So you see I am as much rooted to Clochegourde as one of the leaden finials is to the roof. I have kept nothing from you, monsieur. The neighbors know nothing of the secrets of Clochegourde; you now know them all. Say nothing of the place but what is kind and pleasant, and you will earn my esteem—my gratitude," she added in a softened tone. "On these conditions you can always come to Clochegourde—you will find friends here."

"But I have never known what it is to suffer," exclaimed I. "You alone——"

"Nay," said she, with that resigned woman's smile that might melt granite, "do not be dismayed by my confidences. They show you life as it is, and not as your fancy had led you to hope. We all have our faults and our good points. If I had married a spendthrift, he would have ruined me. If I had been the wife of some ardent and dissipated youth, he would have been a favorite with women; perhaps he would have been unfaithful, and I should have died of jealousy.—I am jealous!" she exclaimed in an excited tone that rang like the thunderclap of a passing storm.

“Well, M. de Mortsauf loves me as much as it is in him to love; all the affection of which his heart is capable is poured out at my feet, as the Magdalen poured out her precious balm at the feet of the Saviour. Believe me when I tell you that a life of love is an exception to every earthly law; every flower fades, every great joy has a bitter morrow—when it has a morrow. Real life is a life of sorrow; this nettle is its fit image; it has sprouted in the shade of the terrace, and grows green on its stem without any sunshine. Here, as in northern latitudes, there are smiles in the sky, rare, to be sure, but making amends for many griefs. After all, if a woman is exclusively a mother, is she not tied by sacrifices rather than by joys? I can draw down on myself the storms I see ready to break on the servants or on my children, and as I thus conduct them I feel some mysterious and secret strength. The resignation of one day prepares me for the next.

“And God does not leave me hopeless. Though I was at one time in despair over my children’s health, I now see that as they grow up they grow stronger. And, after all, our house is improved, our fortune is amended. Who knows whether M. de Mortsauf’s old age may not bring me happiness.

“Believe me, the human being who can appear in the presence of the Great Judge, leading any comforted soul that had been ready to curse life, will have transformed his sorrows into delight. If my suffering has secured the happiness of my family, is it really suffering?”

“Yes,” replied I. “Still, it was necessary suffering, as mine has been, to make me appreciate the fruit that has ripened here among stones. And now perhaps we may eat of it together, perhaps we may admire its wonders!—the flood of affection it can shed on the soul, the sap which can revive the fading leaves. Then life is no longer a burden; we have cast it from us. Great God! can you not understand?” I went on, in the mystical strain to which religious training had accustomed us both. “See what roads we have trodden to meet at last! What loadstone guided us across the ocean of bitter waters to the fresh springs flowing at the



foot of the mountains, over sparkling sands, between green and flowery banks? Have not we, like the Kings of the East, followed the same star? And we stand by the manger where lies an awakening Babe—a divine Child who will shoot his arrows at the head of the leafless trees, who will wake the world to new life for us by his glad cries, who will lend savor to life by continual delights, and give slumbers by night and contentment by day. Are we not more than brother and sister? What Heaven has joined, put not asunder.

“The sorrows of which you speak are the grain scattered freely abroad by the hand of the sower, to bring forth a harvest already golden under the most glorious sun. Behold and see! Shall we not go forth together and gather it ear by ear?—What fervor is in me that I dare to speak to you thus? Answer me, or I will never cross the Indre again.”

“You have spared me the name of Love,” said she, interrupting me in a severe tone; “but you have described a feeling of which I know nothing—which to me is prohibited. You are but a boy, and again I forgive you; but it is for the last time. Understand, monsieur, my whole heart is drunk, so to speak, with motherhood. I love M. de Mortsauf, not as a social duty, nor as an investment to earn eternal bliss, but from an irresistible feeling, clinging to him by every fiber of my heart. Was I forced into this marriage? I chose it out of sympathy with misfortune. Was it not the part of woman to heal the bruises of time, to comfort those who had stood in the breach and come back wounded?”

“How can I tell you? I felt a sort of selfish pleasure in seeing that you could amuse him. Is not that purely motherly? Has not my long story shown you plainly that I have three children who must never find me wanting, on whom I must shed a healing dew and all the sunshine of my soul without allowing the smallest particle to be adulterated? Do not turn a mother’s milk.

“So though the wife in me is invulnerable, never speak to me thus again. If you fail to respect this simple prohibition, I warn you the door of this house will be closed

against you forever. I believed in pure friendship, in a voluntary brotherhood more stable than any natural relationship. I was mistaken! I looked for a friend who would not judge me, a friend who would listen to me in those hours of weakness when a voice of reproof is murderous, a saintly friend with whom I should have nothing to fear. Youth is magnanimous, incapable of falsehood, self-sacrificing, and disinterested; as I saw your constancy, I believed, I confess, in some help from Heaven; I believed I had met a spirit that would be to me alone what the priest is to all, a heart into which I might pour out my sorrows when they are too many, and utter my cries when they insist on being heard, and would choke me if I suppressed them. In that way my life, which is so precious to these children, might be prolonged till Jacques is a man. But this, perhaps, is too selfish. Can the tale of Petrarch's Laura be repeated?—I deceived myself, this is not the will of God. I must die at my post like a soldier, without a friend. My confessor is stern, austere—and my aunt is dead.”

Two large tears, sparkling in the moonlight, dropped from her eyes and rolled down her cheeks to her chin; but I held out my hand in time to catch them, and drank them with pious avidity, excited by her words, that rang with those ten years of secret weeping, of expended feeling, of incessant care, of perpetual alarms—the loftiest heroism of your sex. She gazed at me with a look of mild amazement.

“This,” said I, “is the first holy communion of love. Yes; I have entered into your sorrows, I am one with your soul, as we become one with Christ by drinking His sacred blood. To love even without hope is happiness. What woman on earth could give me any joy so great as that of having imbibed your tears!—I accept the bargain which must no doubt bring me suffering. I am yours without reserve, and will be just whatever you wish me to be.”

She checked me by a gesture, and said—

“I consent to the compact if you will never strain the ties that bind us.”

“Yes,” said I. “But the less you grant me, the more sure must I be that I really possess it.”

"So you begin by distrusting me," she replied, with melancholy doubtfulness.

"No, by one pure delight. For, listen, I want a name for you which no one ever calls you by; all my own, like the affection that we give each other."

"It is much to ask," said she. "However, I am less ungenerous than you think me. M. de Mortsauf calls me Blanche. One person only, the one I loved best, my adorable aunt, used to call me Henriette. I will be Henriette again for you."

I took her hand and kissed it, and she yielded it with the full confidence which makes woman our superior—a confidence that masters us. She leaned against the brick parapet and looked out over the river.

"Are you not rash, dear friend," said she, "to rush with one leap to the goal of your course? You have drained at the first draught a cup offered you in all sincerity. But a true feeling knows no half measures; it is all or nothing.—M. de Mortsauf," she went on after a moment's silence, "is above everything loyal and proud. You might perhaps be tempted for my sake to overlook what he said; if he has forgotten it, I will remind him of it to-morrow. Stay away from Clochegourde for a few days; he will respect you all the more. On Sunday next, as we come out of church, he will make the first advances. I know him. He will make up for past offenses, and will like you the better for having treated him as a man responsible for his words and deeds."

"Five days without seeing you, hearing your voice."

"Never put such fervor into your speech to me," said she.

We twice paced the terrace in silence. Then, in a tone of command, which showed that she had entered into possession of my soul, she said—

"It is late; good-night."

I wished to kiss her hand; she hesitated; then she gave it me, saying in a voice of entreaty—

"Never take it unless I give it you; leave me completely free, or else I shall be at your bidding, and that must not be."

"Good-by," said I.

I went out of the little gate at the bottom of the garden, which she opened for me. Just as she was shutting it, she opened it again, and held out her hand, saying—

“You have been indeed kind this evening. You have brought comfort into all my future life.—Take it, my friend, take it.”

I kissed it again and again, and when I looked up I saw that there were tears in her eyes.

She went up to the terrace and looked after me across the meadow. As I went along the road to Frapesle, I could still see her white dress in the moonlight; then, a few minutes later, a light was shining in her window.

“Oh, my Henriette!” thought I, “the purest love that ever burnt on earth shall be yours.”

I got home to Frapesle, looking back at every step. My spirit was full of indescribable, ineffable gladness. A glorious path at last lay open to the self-devotion that swells every youthful heart, and that in me had so long lain inert. I was consecrated, ordained, like a priest who at one step starts on a totally new life. A simple “*Yes, madame,*” had pledged me to preserve in my heart and for myself alone an irresistible passion, and never to trespass beyond friendship to tempt this woman little by little to love. Every noble feeling awoke within me with a tumult of voices.

Before finding myself cabined in a bedroom, I felt that I must pause in rapture under the blue vault spangled with stars, to hear again in my mind’s ear those tones as of a wounded dove, the simple accents of her ingenuous confidence, and inhale with the air the emanations of her soul which she must be sending out to me. How noble she appeared to me—the woman who so utterly forgot herself in her religious care for weak or suffering or wounded creatures, her devotedness apart from legal chains. She stood serene at the stake of saintly martyrdom! I was gazing at her face as it appeared to me in the darkness, when suddenly I fancied that I discerned in her words a mystical significance which made her seem quite sublime. Perhaps she meant that I was to be to her what she was to her little world; perhaps she intended to derive strength and consolation from me by thus raising

me to her sphere, to her level—or higher? The stars, so some bold theorists tell us, thus interchange motion and light. This thought at once lifted me to ethereal realms. I was once more in the heaven of my early dreams, and I accounted for the anguish of my childhood by the infinite beatitude in which I now floated.

Ye souls of genius extinguished by tears, misprized hearts, Clarissa Harlowes, saintly and unsung, outcast children, guiltless exiles—all ye who entered life through its desert places, who have everywhere found cold faces, closed hearts, deaf ears—do not bewail yourselves! You alone can know the immensity of joy in the moment when a heart opens to you, an ear listens, a look answers you. One day wipes out all the evil days. Past sorrows, broodings, despair, and melancholy—past, but not forgotten—are so many bonds by which the soul clings to its sister soul. The woman, beautified by our suppressed desires, inherits our wasted sighs and loves; she refunds our deluded affections with interest; she supplies a reason for antecedent griefs, for they are the equivalent insisted on by Fate for the eternal joy she bestows on the day when souls are wed. The angels only know the new name by which this sacred love may be called; just as you, sweet martyrs, alone can know what Mme. de Mortsauf had suddenly become to me—hapless and alone.

This scene had taken place on Tuesday; I waited till the following Sunday before recrossing the Indre in my walks.

During these five days great events occurred at Clochegourde. The Count was promoted to the grade of Major-General, and the Cross of Saint-Louis was conferred on him with a pension of four thousand francs. The Duc de Lenoncourt-Givry was made a peer of France, two of his forest domains were restored to him, he had an appointment at Court, and his wife was reinstated in her property, which had not been sold, having formed part of the Imperial Crown lands. Thus the Comtesse de Mortsauf had become one of the richest heiresses in the province. Her mother had come to Clochegourde to pay her a hundred thousand francs she had saved out of the revenues from Givry; this money, settled

on her at her marriage, she had never received ; but the Count, in spite of his necessity, had never alluded to this. In all that concerned the outer circumstances of life, this man's conduct was marked by disinterested pride.

By adding this sum to what he had saved, the Count could now purchase two adjoining estates, that would bring in about nine thousand francs a year. His son was to inherit his maternal grandfather's peerage ; and it occurred to the Count to entail on Jacques the landed property of both families without prejudice to Madeleine, who, with the Duc de Lenoncourt's interest, would, no doubt, marry well.

All these schemes and this good fortune shed some balm on the exile's wounds.

The Duchesse de Lenoncourt at Clochegourde was an event in the district. I sorrowfully reflected what a great lady she was, and I then discerned in her daughter that spirit of caste which her noble soul had hitherto hidden from my eyes. What was I—poor, and with no hope for the future but in my courage and my brains? I never thought of the consequences of the Restoration either to myself or to others.

On Sunday, from the side chapel, where I attended Mass with M. and Mme. de Chessel and the Abbé Quélus, I sent hungry looks to the chapel on the opposite side, where the Duchess and her daughter were, the Count, and the children. The straw bonnet that hid my idol's face never moved, and this ignoring of my presence seemed to be a stronger tie than all that had passed. The noble Henriette de Lenoncourt, who was now my beloved Henriette, was absorbed in prayer ; faith gave an indescribable sentiment of prostrate dependence to her attitude, the feeling of a sacred statue, which penetrated my soul.

As is customary in village churches, vespers were chanted some little time after High Mass. As we left the church, Mme. de Chessel very naturally suggested to her neighbors that they should spend the two hours' interval at Frapesle instead of crossing the Indre and the valley twice in the heat. The invitation was accepted. M. de Chessel gave the Duchess his arm, Mme. de Chessel took the Count's, and I offered mine to the Countess. For the first time I felt that light wrist

resting by my side. As we made our way back from the church to Frapesle through the woods of Saché, where the dappled lights, falling through the leaves, made pretty patterns like *chiné* silk, I went through surges of pride and thrills of feeling that gave me violent palpitations.

"What ails you?" said she, after we had gone a few steps in silence, which I dared not break; "your heart beats too fast."

"I have heard of good fortune for you," said I, "and, like all who love much, I feel some vague fears.—Will not your greatness mar your friendship?"

"Mine!" cried she. "For shame! If you ever have such an idea, I shall not despise you, but simply forget you forever."

I looked at her in a state of intoxication, which must surely have been infectious.

"We get the benefit of an edict which we neither prompted nor asked for, and we shall neither be beggars nor grasping," she went on. "Besides, as you know, neither I nor M. de Mortsauf can ever leave Clochegourde. By my advice he has declined the active command he had a right to at the Maison Rouge. It is enough that my father should have an appointment. And our compulsory modesty," she went on, with a bitter smile, "has been to our boy's advantage already. The King, on whom my father is in attendance, has very graciously promised to reserve for Jacques the favors we have declined."

"Jacques's education, which must now be thought of, is the subject of very grave discussion. He will be the representative of the two houses of Mortsauf and Lenoncourt. I have no ambition but for him, so this is an added anxiety. Not only must Jacques be kept alive, but he must also be made worthy of his name, and the two necessities are antagonistic. Hitherto I have been able to teach him, graduating his tasks to his strength; but where am I to find a tutor who would suit me in this respect? And then, by and by, to what friend can I look to preserve him in that dreadful Paris, where everything is a snare to the soul and peril to the body?"

"My friend," she went on, in an agitated voice, "who that looks at your brow and eye can fail to see in you one of the birds that dwell on the heights. Take your flight, soar up, and one day become the guardian of our beloved child. Go to Paris; and if your brother and your father will not help you, our family, especially my mother, who has a genius for business, will have great influence. Take the benefit of it, and then you will never lack support or encouragement in any career you may choose. Throw your superabundant energy into ambition——"

"I understand," said I, interrupting her. "My ambition is to be my mistress! I do not need that to make me wholly yours. No; I do not choose to be rewarded for my good behavior here by favors there. I will go; I will grow up alone, unaided. I will accept what you can give me; from anyone else I will take nothing."

"That is childish," she murmured, but she could not disguise a smile of satisfaction.

"Besides," I went on, "I have pledged myself. In considering our position, I have resolved to bind myself to you by ties which can never be loosened."

She shivered, and stood still to look in my face.

"What do you mean?" she asked, letting the other couples who were in front of us go forward, and keeping the children by her side.

"Well," replied I, "tell me plainly how you would wish me to love you."

"Love me as my aunt loved me; I have given you her rights by permitting you to call me by the name she had chosen from my names."

"Love you without hope, with entire devotion?—Yes, I will do for you what men do for God. Have you not asked it of me?—I will go into a seminary; I will come out a priest, and I will educate Jacques. Your Jacques shall be my second self: my political notions, my thoughts, my energy, and patience—I will give them all to him. Thus I may remain near you, and no suspicion can fall on my love, set in religion like a silver image in a crystal. You need not fear any of those perfervid outbreaks which come over a man, which once al-



ready proved too much for me. I will be burnt in the fire, and love you with purified ardor."

She turned pale, and answered eagerly—

"Félix, do not fetter yourself with cords, which some day may be an obstacle in the way of our happiness. I should die of grief if I were the cause of such suicide. Child, is the despair of love a religious vocation? Wait to test life before you judge of life. I desire it—I insist. Marry neither the Church nor a woman; do not marry at all; I forbid it. Remain free. You are now one-and-twenty; you scarcely know what the future may have in store.

"Good Heavens! am I mistaken in you? But I believed that in two months one might really know some natures."

"What, then, is it that you hope for?" I asked, with lightning in my eyes.

"My friend, accept my assistance, educate yourself, make a fortune, and you shall know.—Well, then," she added, as if she were betraying her secret, "always hold fast to Madeleine's hand, which is at this moment in yours."

She had bent towards me to whisper these words, which showed how seriously she had thought of my future prospects.

"Madeleine?" cried I. "Never!"

These two words left us silent again and greatly agitated. Our minds were tossed by such upheavals as leave indelible traces.

Just before us was a wooden gate into the park of Frapesle—I think I can see it now, with its tumbledown side-posts overgrown with climbing plants, moss, weeds, and brambles. Suddenly an idea—that of the Count's death—flashed like an arrow through my brain, and I said—

"I understand."

"That is fortunate," she replied, in a tone which made me see that I had suspected her of a thought that could never have occurred to her.

Her pure-mindedness wrung from me a tear of admiration, made bitter indeed by the selfishness of my passion. Then, with a revulsion of feeling, I thought that she did not love me enough to wish for freedom. So long as love shrinks

from crime, it seems to have a limit, and love ought to be infinite. I felt a terrible spasm at my heart.

"She does not love me," thought I.

That she might not read my soul, I bent down and kissed Madeleine's hair.

"I am afraid of your mother," I said to the Countess, to reopen the conversation.

"So am I," she replied, with a childish gesture. "Do not forget to address her as Mme. la Duchesse, and speak to her in the third person. Young people of the present day have forgotten those polite formalities; revive them; do that much for me. Besides, it is always in good taste to be respectful to a woman, whatever her age may be, and to accept social distinctions without hesitancy. Is not the homage you pay to recognized superiority a guarantee for what is due to yourself? In society everything holds together. The Cardinal de Rovere and Raphael d'Urbino were in their time two equally respected powers.

"You have drunk the milk of the Revolution in your schools, and your political ideas may show the taint; but as you get on in life, you will discover that ill-defined notions of liberty are inadequate to create the happiness of nations. I, before considering, as a Lenoncourt, what an aristocracy is or ought to be, listen to my peasant common-sense, which shows me that society exists only by the hierarchy. You are at a stage in your life when you must make a wise choice. Stick to your party, especially," she added, with a laugh, "when it is on the winning side."

I was deeply touched by these words, in which wise policy lurked below the warmth of her affection, a union which gives women such powers of fascination. They all know how to lend the aspect of sentiment to the shrewdest reasoning.

Henriette, in her anxiety to justify the Count's actions, had, as it seemed, anticipated the reflections which must arise in my mind when, for the first time, I saw the results of being a courtier. M. de Mortsau, a king in his domain, surrounded with his historic halo, had assumed magnificent proportions in my eyes, and I own that I was greatly astonished at the distance he himself set between the Duchess and him-

self by his subservient manner. A slave even has his pride; he will only obey the supreme despot; I felt myself humbled at seeing the abject attitude of the man who made me tremble by overshadowing my love. This impulse of feeling revealed to me all the torment of a woman whose generous soul is joined to that of a man whose meanness she has to cover decently every day. Respect is a barrier which protects great and small alike; each on his part can look the other steadily in the face.

I was deferent to the Duchess by reason of my youth; but where others saw only the Duchess, I saw my Henriette's mother, and there was a solemnity in my respect.

We went into the front court of Frapesle, and there found all the party. The Comte de Mortsauf introduced me to the lady with much graciousness, and she examined me with a cold, reserved manner. Mme. de Lenoncourt was then a woman of fifty-six, extremely well preserved, and with lordly manners. Seeing her hard, blue eyes, her wrinkled temples, her thin, ascetic face, her stately upright figure, her constant quiescence, her dull pallor—in her daughter brilliant whiteness—I recognized her as of the same race as my own mother, as surely as a mineralogist recognizes Swedish iron. Her speech was that of the old Court circles; she pronounced *oit* as *ait*, spoke of *frait* for *froid*, and of *porteur* for *porteurs*. I was neither servile nor prim, and I behaved so nicely, that as we went to vespers, the Countess said in my ear, "You are perfect."

The Count came up to me, took my hand, and said, "We have not quarreled, Félix? If I was a little hasty, you will forgive your old comrade. We shall probably stay to dine here, and we hope to see you at Clochegourde on Thursday, the day before the Duchess leaves us. I am going to Tours on business.—Do not neglect Clochegourde, my mother-in-law is an acquaintance I advise you to cultivate; her drawing-room will pitch the keynote for the Faubourg Saint-Germain. She has the tradition of the finest society, she is immensely well informed, and knows the armorial bearings of every gentleman in Europe from the highest to the lowest."

The Count's good taste, aided perhaps by the counsels of

his good genius, told well in the new circumstances in which he was placed by the triumph of his party. He was neither arrogant nor offensively polite; he showed no affectation, and the Duchess no patronizing airs. M. and Mme. de Chessel gratefully accepted the invitation to dinner on the following Thursday.

The Duchess liked me, and her way of looking at me made me understand that she was studying me as a man of whom her daughter had spoken. On our return from church she inquired about my family, and asked whether the Vandenesse, who was already embarked in diplomacy, were a relation of mine.

"He is my brother," said I.

Then she became almost affectionate. She informed me that my grand-aunt, the old Marquise de Listomère, had been a Grandlieu. Her manner was polite, as M. de Mortsauf's had been on the day when he saw me for the first time. Her eyes lost that haughty expression by which the princes of the earth make you feel the distance that divides you from them.

I knew hardly anything of my family; the Duchess told me that my great-uncle, an old abbé whom I did not know even by name, was a member of the Privy Council; that my brother had got promotion; and finally, that, by a clause in the Charter, of which I had heard nothing, my father was restored to his title of Marquis.

"I am but a chattel, a serf to Clochegourde," said I to the Countess in an undertone.

The fairy wand of the Restoration had worked with a rapidity quite astounding to children brought up under Imperial rule. To me these changes meant nothing. Mme. de Mortsauf's lightest word or merest gesture were the only events to which I attached any importance. I knew nothing of politics, nor of the ways of the world. I had no ambition but to love Henriette better than Petrarch loved Laura. This indifference made the Duchess look upon me as a boy.

A great deal of company came to Frapesle, and we were thirty at dinner. How enchanting for a young man to see

the woman he loves the most beautiful person présent, and the object of passionate admiration, while he knows the light of those chastely modest eyes is for him alone, and is familiar enough with every tone of her voice to find in her speech, superficially trivial or ironical, proofs of an ever-present thought of him, even while his heart is full of burning jealousy of the amusements of her world!

The Count, delighted with the attentions paid him, was almost young again; his wife hoped it might work some change in him; I was gay with Madeleine, who, like all children in whom the body is too frail for the wrestling soul, made me laugh by her amazing remarks, full of sarcastic but never malignant wit, which spared no one. It was a lovely day. One word, one hope, born that morning, had brightened all nature, and, seeing me so glad, Henriette was glad too.

"This happiness falling across her gray and cloudy life had done her good," she told me next day.

Of course I spent the morrow at Clochegourde; I had been exiled for five days, and thirsted for life. The Count had set out for Tours at five in the morning.

A serious matter of dispute had come up between the mother and daughter. The Duchess insisted that the Countess should come to Paris, where she would find her a place at Court, and where the Count, by retracting his refusal, might fill a high position. Henriette, who was regarded as a happy wife, would not unveil her griefs to anybody, not even to her mother, nor betray her husband's incapacity. It was to prevent her mother from penetrating the secret of her home life that she had sent M. de Mortsaufr to Tours, where he was to fight out some questions with the lawyers. I alone, as she had said, knew the secrets of Clochegourde.

Having learnt by experience how effective the pure air and blue sky of this valley were in soothing the irritable moods and acute sufferings of sickness, and how favorable the life at Clochegourde was to her children's health, she gave these reasons for her refusal, though strongly opposed by the Duchess—a domineering woman who felt humiliated rather

than grieved by her daughter's far from brilliant marriage. Henriette could see that her mother cared little enough about Jacques and Madeleine, a terrible discovery!

Like all mothers who have been accustomed to treat a married daughter with the same despotism as they exerted over her as a girl, the Duchess adopted measures which allowed of no reply; now she affected insinuating kindness to extract consent to her views, and now assumed a bitterness to gain by fear what she could not achieve by sweetness; then, seeing all her efforts wasted, she showed the same acrid irony as I had known in my own mother. In the course of ten days Henriette went through all the heartrendings a young wife must go through to establish her independence. You, who for your happiness have the best of mothers, can never understand these things. To form any idea of this struggle between a dry, cold, calculating, ambitious woman and her daughter overflowing with the fresh, genial sweetness that never runs dry, you must imagine the lily with which I have compared the Countess crushed in the wheels of a machine of polished steel. This mother had never had anything in common with her daughter; she could not suspect any of the real difficulties which compelled her to forego every advantage from the Restoration, and to live her *solitary* life. This word, which she used to convey her suspicions, opened a gulf between the women which nothing could ever after bridge over.

Though families bury duly their terrible quarrels, look into their life; you will find in almost every house some wide incurable wounds blighting natural feeling; or some genuine and pathetic passion which affinity of character makes eternal and which gives an added shock to the hand of death, leaving a dark and ineradicable bruise; or again, simmering hatred, slowly petrifying the heart, and freezing up all tears at the moment of eternal parting.

Tortured yesterday, tortured to-day, stricken by everyone, even by the two suffering little ones, who were guiltless alike of the ills they endured and of those they caused, how could this sad soul help loving the one person who never gave a blow, but who would fain have hedged her round with a triple

barrier of thorns so as to shelter her from storms, from every touch, from every pain?

Though these squabbles distressed me, I was sometimes glad as I felt that she took refuge in my heart, for Henriette confided to me her new griefs. I could appreciate her fortitude in suffering, and the energy of patience she could maintain. Every day I understood more perfectly the meaning of her words, "Love me as my aunt loved me."

"Have you really no ambition?" said the Duchess to me at dinner in a severe tone.

"Madame," replied I, with a very serious mien, "I feel myself strong enough to conquer the world; but I am only one-and-twenty, and I stand alone."

She looked at her daughter with surprise; she had believed that in order to keep me at her side the Countess had snuffed out all my ambition.

The time while the Duchesse de Lenoncourt stayed at Clochegourde was one of general discomfort. The Countess besought me to be strictly formal; she was frightened at a word spoken low; to please her I was obliged to saddle myself with dissimulation.

The great Thursday came; it was a festival of tiresome formality, one of those days which lovers hate, when they are used to the facilities of everyday life, accustomed to find their place ready for them, and the mistress of the house wholly theirs. Love has a horror of everything but itself.

The Duchess returned to enjoy the pomps of the Court, and all fell into order at Clochegourde.

My little skirmish with the Count had resulted in my being more firmly rooted in the house than before; I could come in at any time without giving rise to the slightest remark, and my previous life led me to spread myself like a climbing plant in the beautiful soul which opened to me the enchanted world of sympathetic feeling. From hour to hour, from minute to minute, our brotherly union, based on perfect confidence, became more intimate; we were confirmed in our relative positions: the Countess wrapped me in her cherishing affection, in the white purity of motherly love; while my

passion, seraphic in her presence, when I was absent from her grew fierce and thirsty, like red-hot iron. Thus I loved her with a twofold love, which by turns pierced me with the myriad darts of desire, and then lost them in the sky, where they vanished in the unfathomable ether.

If you ask me why, young as I was, and full of vehement craving, I was satisfied to rest in the illusory hopes of a Platonic affection, I must confess that I was not yet man enough to torment this woman, who lived in perpetual dread of some disaster to her children, constantly expecting some outbreak, some stormy change of mood in her husband; crushed by him when she was not distressed by some ailment in Jacques or Madeleine, and sitting by the bed of one or the other whenever her husband gave her a little peace. The sound of a too impassioned word shook her being; a desire startled her; for her I had to be Love enshrined, strength in tenderness; everything, in short, that she was for others.

And, then, I may say to you, who are so truly woman, the situation had its enchanting quietism, moments of heavenly sweetness, and of the satisfaction that follows on tacit renunciation. Her conscientiousness was infectious, her self-immolation for no earthly reward was impressive by its tenacity; the living but secret piety which held her other virtues together affected all about her like spiritual incense. Besides, I was young; young enough to concentrate my whole nature in the kiss she so rarely allowed me to press on her hand, giving me only the back of it, never the palm—that being to her, perhaps, the border line of sensuality. Though two souls never fused and loved with greater ardor, never was the flesh more bravely or victoriously held in subjection.

Later in life I understood the causes of my complete happiness. At that age no self-interest distracted my heart, no ambition crossed the current of a feeling which, like an unstemmed torrent, fed its flow with everything it carried before it. Yes, as we grow older the woman is what we love in a woman; whereas we love everything in the first woman we love—her children are our children, her house, her interests, are our own; her grief is our greatest grief; we love her dress



and her belongings, it vexes us more to see her corn spilt than it would to lose our own money; we feel ready to quarrel with a stranger who should meddle with the trifles on the chimney-shelf. This sanctified love makes us live in another, while afterwards, alas! we absorb that other life into our own, and require the woman to enrich our impoverished spirit with her youthful feeling.

I was erelong one of the family, and found here for the first time the infinite soothing which is to an aching heart what a bath is to the tired limbs; the soul is refreshed on every side, anointed in its inmost folds. You cannot understand this: you are a woman, and this is the happiness you give without ever receiving in kind. Only a man can know the delicate enjoyment of being the privileged friend of the mistress of another home, the secret pivot of her affections. The dogs cease to bark at you; the servants, like the dogs, recognize the hidden passport you bear; the children, who have no insincerities, who know that their share will never be smaller, but that you bring joy to the light of their life—the children have a spirit of divination. To you they become kittenish, with the delightful tyranny that they keep for those they adore and who adore them; they are shrewdly knowing, and your guileless accomplices; they steal up on tiptoe, smile in your face, and silently leave you. Everything welcomes you, loves you, and smiles upon you. A true passion is like a beautiful flower, which it is all the more delightful to find when the soil that produces it is barren and wild.

But if I had the delights of being thus naturalized in a family where I made relationships after my own heart, I also paid the penalties. Hitherto M. de Mortsauf had controlled himself in my presence; I had only seen the general outline of his faults, but I now discerned their application in its fullest extent, and I saw how nobly charitable the Countess had been in her description of her daily warfare. I felt all the angles of his intolerable temper; I heard his ceaseless outcries about mere trifles, his complaints of ailments of which no sign was visible, his innate discontent, which blighted her life, and the incessant craving to rule, which would have made him devour fresh victims every year. When we walked out

in the evening, he chose the way we went; but wherever it might be, he was always bored by it; when he got home he blamed others for his fatigue—it was his wife who had done it, by taking him against his will the way she wanted to go; he forgot that he had led us, and complained of being ruled by her in every trifle, of never being allowed to decide or think for himself, of being a mere cipher in the house. If his hard words fell on silent patience, he got angry, feeling the limit to his power; he would inquire sharply whether religion did not require wives to submit to their husbands, and whether it was decent to make a father contemptible before his children. He always ended by touching some sensitive chord in his wife; and when he had struck it, he seemed to find particular pleasure in this domineering pettiness.

Sometimes he affected gloomy taciturnity and morbid dejection, which frightened his wife, and led her to lavish on him the most touching care. Like spoilt children, who exert their power without a thought of their mother's alarms, he allowed himself to be petted like Jacques or Madeleine, of whom he was very jealous. At last, indeed, I discovered that in the smallest, as in the most important matters, the Count behaved to his servants, his children, and his wife as he had to me over the backgammon.

On the day when I first understood, root and branch, those miseries which, like forest creepers, stifled and crushed the movement and the very breathing of this family, which cast a tangle of fine but infinitely numerous threads about the working of the household, hindering every advance of fortune by hampering the most necessary steps, I was seized with admiring awe, which subjugated my love and crushed it down into my heart. What was I, good God! The tears I had swallowed filled me with a sort of rapturous intoxication; it was a joy to me to identify myself with this wife's endurance. Till then I had submitted to the Count's tyranny as a smuggler pays his fines; thenceforth I voluntarily received the despot's blows to be as close as possible to Henriette. The Countess understood, and allowed me to take my place at her side, rewarding me by granting me to share her penance, as of old the repentant apostate, eager to fly

heavenwards with his brethren, won permission to die on the arena.

"But for you this life would be too much for me," said she one night when the Count had been more annoying, more acrid, and more whimsical than usual, as flies are in great heat.

He had gone to bed. Henriette and I sat during part of the evening under the acacias basking in the beams of sunset, the children playing near us. Our words, mere infrequent exclamations, expressed the sympathetic feelings in which we had taken refuge from our common sufferings. When words failed us, silence served us faithfully; our souls entered into each other, so to speak, without hindrance, but without the invitation of a kiss; each enjoying the charm of pensive torpor, they floated together on the ripples of the same dream, dipped together in the river, and came forth like two nymphs as closely one as even jealousy could wish, but free from every earthly tie. We plunged into a bottomless abyss, and came back to the surface, our hands empty, but asking each other by a look, "Out of so many days, shall we ever have one single day for our own?"

When rapture culls for us these blossoms without root, why is it that the flesh rebels? In spite of the enervating poetry of the evening, which tinged the brickwork of the parapet with sober and soothing tones of orange; in spite of the religious atmosphere, which softened the shouts of the children, leaving us at peace, longing ran in sparks of fire through my veins like the signal for a blaze of rockets. At the end of three months I was beginning to be dissatisfied with the lot appointed to me; and I was softly fondling Henriette's hand, trying thus to expend a little of the fever that was scorching me.

Henriette was at once Mme. de Mortsauf again; a few tears rose to my eyes, she saw them, and gave me a melting look, laying her hand on my lips.

"Understand," said she, "that this costs me tears too. The friendship that asks so great a favor is dangerous."

I broke out in a passion of reproach, I spoke of all I suffered, and of the small alleviation I craved to help me

to endure it. I dared tell her that at my age, though the senses were spiritualized, the spirit had a sex; that I could die—but not without having spoken.

She reduced me to silence with a flashing look of pride, in which I seemed to read the Cacique's reply, "Am I then on a bed of roses?" Perhaps, too, I was mistaken. Ever since the day when, at the gate of Frapesle, I had wrongly ascribed to her the idea which would build our happiness on a tomb, I had been ashamed to stain her soul by uttering a wish tainted with mere criminal passion.

Then she spoke, and in honeyed words told me that she could never be wholly mine, that I ought to know that. I understood, as she spoke the words, that if I submitted, I should have dug a gulf between us. I bent my head. She went on, saying that she had an inmost conviction that she might love a brother without offense to God or man; that there is some comfort in thus taking such an affection as a living image of Divine Love, which, according to the good Saint-Martin, is the life of the world. If I could not be to her some such person as her old director, less than a lover but more than a brother, we must meet no more. She could but die, offering up to God this added anguish, though she could not endure it without tears and torment.

"I have given you more than I ought," she said in conclusion, "since there is nothing more that you can take, and I am already punished."

I could but soothe her, promise never, never to cause her a moment's pain, and vow to love her at twenty as old men love their youngest born.

Next morning I came early to the house. She had no flowers to put in the vases in her gray drawing-room. I tramped across the fields and through the vineyards, hunting for flowers to make her two nosegays; and as I gathered them one by one, cutting them with long stems and admiring them, it struck me that there was a harmony in their hues and foliage, a poetry that found its way to the understanding by fascinating the eye, just as musical phrases arouse a thousand associations in loved and loving hearts. If color is organic light, must it not have its meaning, as vibrations

of the air have? Helped by Jacques and Madeleine, all three of us happy in contriving a surprise for our dear one, I sat down on the lower steps of the terrace flight, where we spread out our flowers, and set to work to compose two nosegays, by which I intended to symbolize a sentiment.

Picture to yourself a fountain of flowers, gushing up, as it were, from the vase and falling in fringed waves, and from the heart of it my aspirations rose as silver-cupped lilies and white roses. Among this cool mass twinkled blue cornflowers, forget-me-nots, bugloss—every blue flower whose hues, borrowed from the sky, blend so well with white; for are they not two types of innocence—that which knows nothing, and that which knows all—the mind of a child and the mind of a martyr? Love has its blazonry, and the Countess read my meaning. She gave me one of those piercing looks that are like the cry of a wounded man touched on the tender spot; she was at once shy and delighted. What a reward I found in that look! What encouragement in the thought that I could please her and refresh her heart!

So I invented Father Castel's theory as applied to love, and rediscovered for her a lore lost to Europe where flowers of language take the place of the messages conveyed in the East by color and fragrance. And it was charming to express my meaning through these daughters of the sun, the sisters of the blossoms that open under the radiance of love. I soon had an understanding with the products of the rural flora, just as a man I met at a later time had with bees.

Twice a week, during the remainder of my stay at Frapesle, I carried out the long business of this poetical structure, for which I needed every variety of grass, and I studied them all with care, less as a botanist than as an artist, and with regard to their sentiment rather than their form. To find a flower where it grew I often walked immense distances along the river bank, through the dells, to the top of cliffs, across the sandhills and commons, gathering ideas from among clumps of heath. In these walks I discovered for myself pleasures unknown to the student who lives in meditation, to the husbandman engaged on some special culture, to the artisan tied to the town, to the merchant nailed to

his counting-house, but known to some foresters, to some woodsmen, to some dreamers.

Nature has certain effects of boundless meaning, rising to the level of the greatest intellectual ideas. Thus, a blossoming heath covered with diamonds of dew that hang on every leaf sparkling in the sun, a thing of infinite beauty for one single eye that may happen to see it. Or a forest nook, shut in by tumbled bowlders, broken by willows, carpeted with moss, dotted with juniper shrubs—it scares you by its wild, hurtled, fearful aspect, and the cry of the hawk comes up to you. Or a scorching sandy common with no vegetation; a stony, precipitous plateau, the horizon reminding you of the desert—but there I found an exquisite and lonely flower, a pulsatilla waving its violet silk pennon in honor of its golden stamens; a pathetic image of my fair idol, alone in her valley! Or again, broad pools over which nature flings patches of greenery, a sort of transition between animal and vegetable being, and in a few days life is there—floating plants and insects, like a world in the upper air. Or again, a cottage with its cabbage garden, its vineyard, its fences, overhanging a bog, and surrounded by a few meager fields of rye—emblematic of many a humble life. Or a long forest avenue, like the nave of a cathedral where the pillars are trees, their branches meeting like the groins of a vault, and at the end a distant glade seen through the foliage, dappled with light and shade, or glowing in the ruddy beams of sunset like the painted glass window of a choir, filled with birds for choristers. Then, as you come out of the grove, a chalky fallow where full-fed snakes wriggle over the hot, crackling moss, and vanish into their holes after raising their graceful, proud heads. And over these pictures cast floods of sunshine, rippling like a nourishing tide, or piles of gray cloud in bars like the furrows on an old man's brow, or the cool tones of a faintly yellow sky banded with pale light—and listen! You will hear vague harmonies in the depth of bewildering silence.

During the months of September and October I never collected a nosegay which took me less than three hours of seeking, I was so lost in admiration—with the mild indolence of a poet—of these transient allegories which represented to

me the strongest contrasts of human life, majestic scenes in which my memory now digs for treasure. To this day I often wed to such grand spectacles my remembrance of the soul that then pervaded nature. I still see in them my Queen, whose white dress floated through the copse and danced over the lawns, and whose spirit came up to me like a promise of fruition from every flower-cup of amorous stamens.

No declaration, no proof of unbounded passion was ever more contagious than were these symphonies of flowers, wherein my cheated desires gave me such inspiration as Beethoven could express in notes; with vehement reaction on himself, transcendent heavenward flights. When she saw them Henriette was no longer Mme. de Mortsau. She came back to them again and again; she fed on them; she found in them all the thoughts I had woven into them, when, to accept the offering, she looked up from her work-frame and said, "Dear! how lovely that is!"

You can imagine this enchanting communication through the arrangement of a nosegay, as you would understand Saadi from a fragment of his poetry. Have you ever smelt in the meadows, in the month of May, the fragrance which fills all creatures with the heady joy of procreation; which, if you are in a boat, makes you dip your hands in the water; which makes you loosen your hair to the breeze, and renews your thoughts like the fresh greenery on the trees of the forest? A small grass, the vernal *Anthoxanthum*, is one of the chief elements in this mysterious combination. No one can wear it with impunity. If you put a few sprays of it in a nosegay, with its shining variegated blades like a finely striped green-and-white dress, unaccountable pulses will stir within you, opening the rosebuds in your heart that modesty keeps closed. Imagine, then, round the wide edge of the china jar a border composed entirely of the white tufts peculiar to a *Sedum* that grows in the vineyards of Touraine, a faint image of the wished-for forms, bowed like a submissive slave-girl. From this base rise the tendrils of bindweed with its white funnels, bunches of pink rest-harrow mingled with young shoots of oak gorgeously tinted and lustrous; these all stand forward, humbly drooping like

weeping willow, timid and suppliant like prayers. Above, you see the slender blossoming sprays, forever tremulous, of quaking grass and its stream of yellowish anthers; the snowy tufts of feather grass from brook and meadow, the green hair of the barren brome, the frail agrostis—pale, purple hopes that crown our earliest dreams, and that stand out against the gray-green background in the light that plays on all these flowering grasses. Above these, again, there are a few China roses, mingling with the light tracery of carrot leaves with plumes of cotton grass, marabout tufts of meadow-sweet, umbels of wild parsley, the pale hair of travelers' joy, now in seed, the tiny crosslets of milky-white candy-tuft and milfoil, the loose sprays of rose-and-black fumitory, tendrils of the vine, twisted branches of the honeysuckle—in short, every form these artless creatures can show that is wildest and most ragged—flamboyant and trident; spear-shaped, dentate leaves, and stems as knotted as desire writhing in the depths of the soul. And from the heart of this overflowing torrent of love, a grand red double poppy stands up with bursting buds, flaunting its burning flame above starry jessamine and above the ceaseless shower of pollen, a cloud dancing in the air and reflecting the sunshine in its glittering notes. Would not any woman, who is alive to the seductive perfume that lurks in the *Anthoxanthum*, understand this mass of abject ideas, this tender whiteness broken by uncontrollable impulses, and this red fire of love imploring joys denied it in the hundred struggles of an undying, unwearyed, and eternal passion? Set this appeal in the sunshine of a window so as to do justice to all its subtle details, its delicate contrasts, and arabesque elegance, that its mistress may see perhaps an open blossom moist with a tear—she will be very near yielding; an angel, or the voice of her children, alone will check her on the edge of the abyss.

What do we offer up to God? Incense, light, and song, the purest expression at our command. Well, then, was not all that we offer to God dedicated to Love in this poem of glowing flowers, ever murmuring sadly to the heart while encouraging hidden raptures, unconfessed hopes, and illu-



sions which flash and are gone like shooting stars in a hot night?

These neutral pleasures were a comfort to us, helping us to cheat Nature, exasperated by long study of the beloved face and by glances which find enjoyment in piercing to the very core of the form they gaze on. To me—I dare not say to her—these utterances were like the rifts through which the water spurts in a solid dyke, and which often prevent a catastrophe by affording a necessary outlet. Abstinence brings overwhelming exhaustion that finds succor in the few crumbs dropping from the sky, which, from Dan to the Sahara, sheds manna on the pilgrim. And I have found Henriette before one of those nosegays, her hands hanging loosely, a prey to those stormy contemplations when the feelings swell the bosom, give light to the brow, surge up in waves that toss and foam and leave us enervated by exhaustion.

I have never since gathered nosegays for anyone!

When we had invented this language for our own use, we felt the sort of satisfaction that a slave finds in deceiving his master.

All the rest of the month, when I hurried up the garden, I often saw her face at the window; and when I went into the drawing-room, she was sitting at her frame. If I did not arrive punctually at the time we had agreed upon, without ever fixing an hour, I sometimes saw her white figure on the terrace, and when I found her there, she would say—

“I came to meet you to-day. Must we not pet the youngest child?”

The dreadful games of backgammon with the Count had come to an end. His recent purchases required him to be constantly busy, inspecting, verifying, measuring, and planning; he had orders to give, field-work that required the master's eye, and matters to be settled between him and his wife. The Countess and I frequently walked out to join him on his new land, taking the two children, who all the way would run after butterflies, stag-beetles, and crickets, and gather nosegays too—or, to be exact, sheaves of flowers.

To walk with the woman he loves, to have her hand on his arm, to pick her road for her! These infinite joys are enough for a man's lifetime. Their talk is then so confiding! We went alone, we came back with the General—a little mocking name we gave the Count when he was in a good humor. This difference in our order of march tinged our happiness by a contrast of which the secret is known only to hearts which meet under difficulties. On our way home, this felicity—a look, a pressure of the hand—was checkered by uneasiness. Our speech, freely uttered as we went, had mysterious meanings as we came back, when one of us, after a pause, found a reply to some insidious inquiry, or a discussion we had begun was carried on in the enigmatic phraseology to which our language lends itself, and which women invent so cleverly. Who has not known the pleasure of such an understanding, in an unknown sphere, as it were, where spirits move apart from the crowd and meet superior to all ordinary laws? Once a mad hope rose in me, to be immediately crushed when, in reply to the Count who asked what we were talking about, Henriette said something with a double meaning, which he took quite simply. This innocent jest amused Madeleine, but it brought a blush to her mother's cheek; and, by a stern look, she told me that she was capable of withdrawing her soul as she had once withdrawn her hand, intending to be always a blameless wife. But a purely spiritual union has such charms, that we did the same again on the morrow.

Thus the hours, days, weeks flew on, full of ever-new felicity. We had come to the season of the vintage, in Touraine always a high festival. By the end of September the sun is less fierce than during harvest, making it safe to linger in the open air without fear of sunstroke or fatigue. It is easier, too, to gather grapes than to reap corn. The fruit is fully ripe. The crops are carried, bread is cheaper, and increased abundance makes life brighter. Then the fears that always hang over the result of the year's toil, in which so much money and so much sweat are expended, are relieved by filled granaries and cellars waiting to be filled. The vintage comes as a jovial dessert to the

harvest feast, and the sky always smiles on it in Touraine, where the autumn is a beautiful season.

In that hospitable province the vintagers are fed by the owner; and as these meals are the only occasions throughout the year when these poor laborers have substantial and well-cooked food, they look forward to them as, in patriarchal households, the children count on anniversary festivals. They crowd to the estates where the masters are known to be open-handed. So every house is full of people and provisions. The winepresses are always at work. The world seems alive with the merry gang of coopers at work, the carts crowded with laughing girls and men, who, getting better wages than at any other time of year, sing on every opportunity. Again, as another cause of enjoyment, all ranks mingle—women and children, masters and servants, everyone takes part in the sacred gathering. These various circumstances may account for the joviality, traditional from age to age, which breaks forth in these last fine days of the year, and of which the remembrance inspired Rabelais of yore to give a Bacchic form to his great work.

Jacques and Madeleine, who had always been ailing, had never before taken part in the vintage, nor had I, and they found childlike delight in seeing me a sharer in their pleasure. Their mother had promised to come with us. We had been to Villaines, where the country baskets are made, and had ordered very nice ones; we four were to gather the fruit off a few rows left for us; but we all promised not to eat too many grapes. The *Gros Co* of the Touraine vineyards is so delicious eaten fresh, that the finest table grapes are scorned in comparison. Jacques made me solemnly promise that I would go to see no other vineyards, but devote myself exclusively to the *Clos* of Clochegourde. Never had these two little creatures, usually so wan and pale, been so bright, and rosy, and excited, and busy as they were that morning. They chattered for the sake of chattering, went and came and trotted about for no visible reason but that, like other children, they had too much vitality to work off; M. and Mme. de Mortsau had never seen them

so well. And I was a child with them, more a child than they were perhaps, for I too hoped for my harvest.

The weather was glorious; we went up to the vineyards and spent half the day there. How we vied with each other in seeking the finest bunches, in seeing which could fill a basket first! They ran to and fro from the vines to their mother, every bunch was shown to her as it was gathered. And she laughed the hearty laugh of youth when, following the little girl with my basket full, I said, like Madeleine, "And look at mine, mamma."

"Dear child," she said to me, "do not get too hot." Then, stroking my hair and my neck, she gave me a little slap on the cheek, adding, "Thou art in a bath!"

This is the only time I ever received from her that verbal caress, the lover's *tu*. I stood looking at the pretty hedges full of red berries, of sloes, and blackberries; I listened to the children shouting; I gazed at the girls pulling the grapes, at the cart full of vats, at the men with baskets on their backs—I stamped every detail on my memory, down to the young almond-tree by which she was standing, bright, flushed, and laughing, under her parasol.

Then I set to work to gather the fruit with a steady, wordless perseverance, and a slow, measured step that left my spirit free. I tasted the ineffable pleasure of a physical employment such as carries life along, regulating the rush of passion which, but for this mechanical movement, was very near a conflagration. I learnt how much wisdom comes of labor, and I understood monastic rule.

For the first time in many days, the Count was neither sullen nor vicious. His boy so well, the future Duc de Lenoncourt-Mortsauf, rosy and fair, and smeared with grape-juice, gladdened his heart. This being the last day of the vintage, the General had promised his people a dance in the evening in the field by Clochegourde, in honor of the return of the Bourbons; thus the festival was to be complete for everybody. On our way home, the Countess took my arm; she leaned on me so as to let my heart feel all the weight of her hand, like a mother who longs to impart her gladness, and said in my ear—

"You bring us good fortune."

And to me, knowing of her sleepless nights, her constant alarms, and her past life, through which she had indeed been supported by the hand of God, but in which all had been barren and weariful, these words, spoken in her deep, soft voice, brought such joys as no woman in the world could ever give me again.

"The monotonous misery of my days is broken, and life is bright with hope," she added after a pause. "Oh, do not desert me! Do not betray my innocent superstitions! Be my eldest, the providence of the little ones."

This is no romance, Natalie; none can discern the infinite depth of such feelings who have not in early life sounded the great lakes on whose shores we live. If to many souls the passions have been as lava-torrents flowing between parched banks, are there not others in which a passion subdued by insurmountable obstacles has filled the crater of the volcano with limpid waters?

We had one more such festival. Mme. de Mortsauf wished that her children should learn something of practical life, and know by what hard labor money must be earned; she had, therefore, given each certain revenues depending on the chances of produce. Jacques was owner of the walnut crop, Madeleine of the chestnuts. A few days after we went forth to the chestnut and walnut harvests. Threshing Madeleine's chestnut-trees; hearing the nuts fall, their spiny husks making them rebound from the dry velvety moss of the unfertile soil on which chestnuts grow; seeing the solemn gravity of the little girl as she looked at the piles, calculating their value, which meant for her such pleasures as she could give herself without control; then the congratulations of Manette, the children's maid, the only person who ever filled the Countess's place with them; the lesson to be derived from this little business, of toil requisite to reap the humblest harvest, so often imperiled by variation of climate,—all these things made up a little drama, the children's ingenuous delight forming a charming contrast with the sober hues of early autumn.

Madeleine had a loft of her own, where I saw the brown

crop safely stowed, sharing in her delight. I am thrilled to this day as I remember the clatter of each basketful of chestnuts rolling out over the yellow chaff that formed the flooring. The Count bought some for the house; the farm bailiffs, the laborers, everyone in the neighborhood found buyers from *Mignonne*, a kindly name which the peasants in those parts are ready to give even to a stranger, but which seemed especially appropriate to Madeleine.

Jacques was not so lucky for his walnut harvest. It rained several days; but I comforted him by advising him to keep his nuts for a time and sell them later. M. de Chesse had told me that the walnut crop had failed in Le Brehémont, in the district round Amboise, and the country about Vouvray. Nut oil is largely used in Touraine. Jacques would make at least forty sous on each tree, and there were two hundred trees, so the sum would be considerable. He meant to buy himself a saddle and bridle for a pony. His wish led to a general discussion, and his father led him to consider the uncertainty of such returns, and the need for making a reserve fund for the years when the trees should be bare of fruit, so as to secure an average income.

I read the Countess's heart in her silence; she was delighted to see Jacques listening to his father, and the father winning back some of the reverence he had forfeited, and all thanks to the subterfuge she had arranged. I told you when describing this woman that no earthly language can ever do justice to her character and genius. While these little scenes are enacted the spirit revels in them with joy, but does not analyze them; but how clearly they afterwards stand out against the gloomy background of a life of vicissitude! They shine like diamonds, set amid thoughts of baser alloy and regrets that melt into reminiscences of vanished happiness! Why should the names of the two estates M. and Mme. de Mortsauf had lately purchased, and which gave them so much to do—La Cassine and La Rhétorière—touch me far more than the greatest names in the Holy Land or in Greece? *Qui aime, le die*, says la Fontaine. (Let those who love tell.) Those names have the talismanic power of the starry words used in sorcery, they are magical

to me; they call up sleeping images which stand forth and speak to me; they carry me back to that happy valley; they create a sky and landscape. But has not conjuration always been possible in the realm of the spiritual world? So you need not wonder to find me writing to you of such familiar scenes. The smallest details of that simple and almost homely life were so many ties, slight as they must seem, which bound me closely to the Countess.

The children's future prospects troubled Mme. de Mortsauf almost as much as their feeble health. I soon saw the truth of what she had told me with regard to her unconfessed importance in the business of the property, which I gradually understood as I studied such facts about the country as a statesman ought to know. After ten years' struggles Mme. de Mortsauf had at last reformed the management of the lands. She had *quartered* them—*mis en quatre*—a term used in those parts for the rotation of crops, a method of sowing wheat on the same field only once in four years, so that the land yields some crop every year instead of lying fallow. To overcome the pig-headed resistance of the peasantry, it had been necessary to cancel the old leases, to divide the property into four large holdings, and farm on half-profits, the system peculiar to Touraine and the adjacent provinces. The landowner provides the dwelling and outbuildings, and supplies seed to working farmers, with whom he agrees to share the cost of husbandry and the profits. The division is undertaken by a *métivier*, a farm bailiff, who is authorized to take the half due to the proprietor; and this system, a costly one, is complicated by the way of keeping accounts, which leads to constant changes in the estimate of the shares.

The Countess had persuaded M. de Mortsauf to keep a fifth farm, consisting of the inclosed lands round Cloche-gourde, in his own hands, partly to give him occupation, but also to demonstrate to the share-farmers by the evidence of facts the superiority of the new methods. Being able here to manage the crops, she had by degrees, with womanly tenacity, had two of the farmhouses rebuilt on the plan of the farms in Artois and Flanders. Her scheme was self-

evident. She intended, when the leases on half-profits should expire, to make these two farms into first-class holdings, and let them for rent in money to active and intelligent tenants, so as to simplify the returns to Clochegourde. Dreading lest she should die the first, she was anxious to leave the Count an income easily collected, and to the children a property which no misadventure could make ruinous.

By this time the fruit-trees planted ten years since were in full bearing. The hedges which guaranteed the boundaries against any dispute in the future had all grown up. The poplars and elms were flourishing. With the recent additions, and by introducing the new system of culture, the estate of Clochegourde, divided into four large holdings, might be made to yield sixteen thousand francs a year in hard cash, at a rent of four thousand francs for each farm; exclusive of the vineyards, the two hundred acres of coppice adjoining, and the home farm. The lanes from these farms were all to come into an avenue leading straight from Clochegourde to the Chinon road. The distance to Tours by this road was no more than five leagues; farmers would certainly not be lacking, especially at a time when everybody was talking of the Count's improvements and his success, and the increased return from his land.

She proposed to spend about fifteen thousand francs on each of the newly purchased properties, to convert the houses on them into fine homesteads so as to let them to advantage after farming them for a year or two, while placing there as steward a man named Martineau, the most trustworthy of the bailiffs, who would presently be out of place; for the leases of the four half-profit farms were about to fall in, and the moment was coming for uniting them into two holdings, and letting them for a rent in money.

These very simple plans, complicated only by the necessary outlay of more than thirty thousand francs, were at this time the subject of long discussions between her and the Count—terrible arguments, in which she was emboldened only by the thought of the children's interest. The mere thought, "If I were to die to-morrow, what would become of them?" made her sick at heart. Only gentle and peace-



able souls, to whom rage is impossible, and who long to see the peace they feel within them reign around them, can ever understand what an effort such a contest needs, what rushes of blood oppress the heart before the struggle is faced, what exhaustion follows after a battle in which nothing has been won. Just now, when her children were less wan, less starveling, and more full of life, for the fruitful season had had its effect on them; just now, when she could watch their play with moistened eyes, and a sense of satisfaction that renewed her strength by reviving her spirits, the poor woman was a victim to the insulting thrusts and cutting innuendoes of determined antagonism. The Count, startled by these changes, denied their utility and their possibility with rigid oppugnancy. To all conclusive reasoning he answered with the arguments of a child who should doubt the heat of the sun in summer. The Countess won at last; the triumph of common-sense over folly salved her wounds, and she forgot them.

On that day she walked to La Cassine and La Rhétorière, to give orders for the buildings. The Count went on in front alone, the children came between, and we followed slowly behind, for she was talking in the sweet, low voice which made her speech sound like tiny ripples of the sea murmuring on fine sand.

"She was sure of success," she said. A rival service was about to start on the road between Chinon and Tours under the management of an active man, a cousin of Manette's, and he wanted to rent a large farmstead on the highroad. He had a large family; the eldest son would drive the coach, the second would attend to the heavy carrying business, while the father, settled at La Rabelaye, a farm halfway on the road, would attend to the horses and cultivate the ground to advantage with the manure from the stables. She had already found a tenant for the second farm, La Baude, lying close to Clochegourde; one of the four half-profit farmers, an honest, intelligent, and active man, who understood the advantages of the new system, had offered to take it on lease. As to La Cassine and La Rhétorière, the soil was the best in all the countryside; when once the

houses were ready, and the fields fairly started, they would only have to be advertised at Tours. Thus, in two years, the estate would bring in about twenty-four thousand francs a year; La Gravelotte, the farm in Le Maine recovered by M. de Mortsaufr, had just been let for nine years, at seven thousand francs a year; the Count's pension as Major-General was four thousand francs;—if all this could not be said to constitute a fortune, at any rate it meant perfect ease; and later, perhaps, further improvements might allow of her going some day to Paris to attend to Jacques's education—two years hence, when the heir presumptive's health should be stronger.

How tremulously did she speak the word *Paris*! And I was at the bottom of this plan; she wanted to be as little apart as possible from her friend.

At these words I caught fire; I told her she little knew me; that, without saying anything to her, I had planned to finish my own education by studying night and day so as to become Jacques's tutor; for that I could never endure to think of any other young man at home in her house.

On this she grew very serious.

"No, Félix," said she. "This is not to be, any more than your becoming a priest. Though you have by that speech touched my motherly heart to the quick, the woman cares for you too well to allow you to become a victim to your fidelity. The reward of such devotion would be that you would be irremediably looked down upon, and I could do nothing to prevent it. No, no! Never let me injure you in any way. You, the Vicomte de Vandenesse, a tutor? You, whose proud motto is '*Ne se Vend.*' (*For no guerdon.*) If you were Richelieu himself, your life would be marred forever. It would be the greatest grief to your family. My friend, you do not know all the insolence such a woman as my mother can throw into a patronizing glance, all the humiliation into one word, all the scorn into a bow!"

"And so long as you love me, what do I care for the world?"

She affected not to hear, and went on—

"Though my father is most kind, and willing to give

me anything I may ask, he would not forgive you for having put yourself into a false position, and would refuse to help you on in the world. I would not see you tutor to the Dauphin! Take Society as you find it, make no blunders in life. My friend, this offer prompted by——”

“By love,” I put in.

“No, by charity,” said she, restraining her tears; “this crazy proposition throws a light on your character; your heart will be your enemy. I insist henceforth on my right to tell you certain truths; give my woman’s eyes the care of seeing for you sometimes.

“Yes, buried here in Clochegourde, I mean to look on silent but delighted at your advancement. As to a tutor, be easy on that score; we will find some good old Abbé, some learned and venerable Jesuit, and my father will gladly pay the sum needed for the education of the boy who is to bear his name. Jacques is my pride!—And he is eleven years old,” she added after a pause. “But he, like you, looks younger. I thought you were thirteen when I first saw you.”

By this time we had reached La Cassine; Jacques and Madeleine and I followed her about as children follow their mother; but we were in the way. I left her for a moment, and went into the orchard, where the elder Martineau, the gamekeeper, with his son the bailiff, was marking trees to be cut down; they discussed the matter as eagerly as if it were their own concern. I saw by this how much the Countess was beloved. I expressed myself to this effect to a day laborer who, with one foot on his spade and his elbow on the handle, was listening to the two men learned in pomology.

“Oh yes, sir,” said he, “she is a good woman, and not proud, like those apes at Azay, who would leave us to die like dogs rather than give a sou extra on a yard of ditching. The day when she leaves the place, the Virgin will cry over it, and we too. She knows what is due to her, but she knows what hard times we have, and considers us.”

With what delight I gave all my spare cash to that man!

A few days after this a pony was bought for Jacques; his father, a capital horseman, wished to inure him very gradually to the fatiguing exercise of riding. The boy had a neat little outfit that he had bought with the price of his walnuts. The morning when he had his first lesson, riding with his father, and followed by Madeleine's shouts of glee as she danced on the lawn round which Jacques was trotting, was to the Countess her first high festival as a mother. Jacques's little collar had been worked by her hands; he had a little sky-blue cloth coat, with a varnished leather belt round the waist, white tucked trousers, and a Scotch bonnet over his thick fair curls; he really was charming to look upon. All the servants of the household came out to share the family joy, and the little heir smiled as he passed his mother, without a sign of fear.

This first act of manliness in the child who had so often been at death's door, the hope of a happier future of which this ride seemed the promise, making him look so bright, so handsome, so healthy—what a delightful reward! Then the father's joy, looking young again, and smiling for the first time in many weeks, the satisfaction that shone in the eyes of the assembled servants, the glee of the old Lenoncourt huntsman, who had come over from Tours, and who, seeing how well the child held his bridle, called out, "Bravo, M. le Vicomte!"—all this was too much for Mme. de Mortsauf, and she melted into tears. She, who was so calm in distress, was too weak to control her joy as she admired her boy riding round and round on the path where she had so often mourned him by anticipation as she carried him to and fro in the sun.

She leaned on my arm without reserve, and said—

"I feel as if I had never been unhappy.—Stay with us to-day."

The lesson ended, Jacques flew into his mother's arm, and she clutched him to her bosom with the vehemence that comes of excessive delight, kissing and fondling him again and again. Madeleine and I went off to make two splendid nosegays to dress the dinner-table in honour of the young horseman.

When we returned to the drawing-room, the Countess said to me—

“The fifteenth of October is indeed a high day! Jacques has had his first riding lesson, and I have set the last stitch in my piece of work.”

“Well, then, Blanche,” said the Count, laughing, “I will pay you for it.”

He offered her his arm and led her into the inner courtyard, where she found a carriage, a present from her father, for which the Count had bought a pair of horses in England; they had arrived with those sent to the Duc de Lenoncourt. The old huntsman had arranged all this in the courtyard during the riding lesson. We got into the carriage, and went off to see the line cleared for the avenue that was to lead directly into the Chinon road, and that was cut straight through the new property acquired by the Count. On our return, the Countess said to me, with deep melancholy—

“I am too happy; happiness is to me like an illness, it overpowers me, and I fear lest it should vanish like a dream.”

I was too desperately in love not to be jealous, and I had nothing to give her! In my fury I tried to think of some way of dying for her.

She asked me what thoughts had clouded my eyes, and I told her frankly; she was more touched than by any gifts, and poured balm on my spirit when, taking me out on the terrace steps, she whispered to me—

“Love me as my aunt loved me—is not that to give your life for me? And if I take it so, is it not to lay me under an obligation every hour of the day?”

“It was high time I should finish my piece of work,” she went on, as we returned to the drawing-room, and I kissed her hand as a renewal of my allegiance. “You perhaps do not know, Félix, why I set myself that long task.—Men find a remedy against their troubles in the occupations of life; the bustle of business diverts their minds; but we women have no support in ourselves to help us to endure. In order to be able to smile at my children and my husband when I was possessed by gloomy ideas, I felt the need of keeping

my grief in check by physical exertion. I thus avoided the collapse that follows any great effort of resolve, as well as the lightning strokes of excitement. The action of lifting my arm in measured time lulled my brain and acted on my spirit when the storm was raging, giving it the rest of ebb and flow, and regulating its emotions. I told my secrets to the stitches, do you see?—Well, as I worked the last chair, I was thinking too much of you! Yes, my friend, far too much. What you put into your nosegays I imparted to my patterns.”

The dinner was a cheerful one. Jacques, like all children to whom we show kindness, jumped upon me and threw his arms round my neck when he saw the flowers I had picked him by way of a crown. His mother pretended to be angry at this infidelity to her, and the dear child gave her the posy she affected to covet, you know how sweetly.

In the evening we played backgammon, I against M. and Mme. de Mortsau, and the Count was charming. Finally, at nightfall, they walked with me as far as the turning to Frapesle, in one of those placid evenings when the harmony of nature gives added depth to our feelings in proportion as it soothes their vividness.

It had been a day by itself to this hapless woman, a spark of light that often shone caressingly on her memory in days of difficulty.

For, indeed, before long the riding lessons became a subject of contention. The Countess, not unreasonably, was afraid of the Count's hard speeches to his little son. Jacques was already growing thinner, and dark rings came round his blue eyes; to save his mother, he would suffer in silence. I suggested a remedy by advising him to tell his father he was tired when the Count was angry, but this was an insufficient palliative, so the old huntsman was to teach him instead of his father, who would not give up his pupil without many struggles. Outcries and discussions began again; the Count found a text for his perpetual fault-finding in the ingratitude of wives, and twenty times a day he threw the carriage, the horses, and the liveries in her teeth.

Finally, one of those disasters occurred which are a stalking-horse for such tempers and such maladies of the brain; the expense of the works at La Cassine and La Rhétorière, where the walls and floors were found to be rotten, amounted to half as much again as the estimate. A clumsy fellow at work there came to report this to M. de Mortsauf, instead of telling the Countess privately. This became the subject of a quarrel, begun mildly, but gradually increasing in bitterness; and the Count's hypochondria, which for some days had been in abeyance, now claimed arrears from the unfortunate Henriette.

That morning I set out from Frapesle, after breakfast, at half-past ten, to make my nosegays at Clochegourde with Madeleine. The little girl brought out the two vases, setting them on the balustrade of the terrace, and I wandered from the gardens to the fields, seeking the lovely but rare flowers of autumn. As I returned from my last expedition, I no longer saw my little lieutenant in her pink sash and frilled cape, and I heard a commotion in the house.

"The General," said Madeleine, in tears, and with her the name was one of aversion for her father, "the General is scolding our mother; do go and help her."

I flew up the steps and went into the drawing-room, where neither the Count nor his wife saw or noticed me. Hearing the madman's noisy outcries, I first shut all the doors, and then came back, for I had seen that Henriette was as white as her gown.

"Never marry, Félix," said the Count. "A wife has the Devil for her counselor; the best of them would invent evil if it did not exist. They are all brute beasts."

Then I had to listen to arguments without beginning and without end. M. de Mortsauf, recurring to his original refusal, now repeated the sottish remarks of the peasants who objected to the new system. He declared that if he had taken the management of Clochegourde, they would have been twice as rich by now. He worded his blasphemies with insulting violence; he swore, he rushed from pillar to post, he moved and banged all the furniture, and in the middle of a sentence he would stop and declare that his marrow was

on fire, or his brain running away in a stream, like his money. His wife was ruining him! Wretched man, of the thirty odd thousand francs a year he possessed, she had brought him more than twenty thousand. The fortune of the Duke and Duchess, bringing in fifty thousand francs a year, was entailed on Jacques.

The Countess smiled haughtily, and gazed out at the sky.

"Yes!" he cried; "you, Blanche, are my tormentor. You are killing me! You want to be rid of me! You are a monster of hypocrisy! And she laughs! Do you know why she can laugh, Félix?"

I said nothing, and hung my head.

"This woman," he went on, answering his own question, "denies me all happiness—she is no more mine than yours, and calls herself my wife! She bears my name, but she fulfills none of the duties which laws, human and divine, require of her; she lies to God and man. She exhausts me with long walks that I may leave her in peace; I disgust her, she hates me, she does all she can to live the life of a girl. And she is driving me mad by imposing privations on me—for everything goes to my poor head. She is burning me at a slow fire, and believes herself a saint—that woman takes the sacrament every month!"

The Countess was by this time weeping bitterly, humiliated by the disgrace of this man, to whom she could only say by way of remonstrance—"Monsieur! monsieur! monsieur!"

Although the Count's words made me blush for him as much as for Henriette, they moved me deeply, for they found a response in the instinct of chastity and delicacy which is, so to speak, the very material of a first love.

"She lives a maiden at my expense!" cried the Count, and again his wife exclaimed—

"Monsieur!"

"What do you mean," he went on, "by your pertinacious *Monsieur*? Am not I your master? Must I teach you to know it?"

He went towards her, thrusting out his white, wolf-like face, that was really hideous, for his yellow eyes had an expression that made him look like a ravenous animal coming



out of a wood. Henriette slid off her chair on to the floor to avoid the blow which was not struck, for she lost consciousness as she fell, completely broken.

The Count was like an assassin who feels the blood-jet of his victim; he stood amazed. I raised the poor woman in my arms, and the Count allowed me to lift her as if he felt himself unworthy to carry her; but he went first and opened the door of the bedroom next the drawing-room, a sacred spot I had never entered. I set the Countess on her feet, and supported her with my arm round her body, while M. de Mortsauf took off the upper coverlet, the eiderdown quilt, and the bedclothes; then, together, we laid her down just as she was. As she recovered consciousness, Henriette signed to us to undo her waistband; M. de Mortsauf found a pair of scissors, and cut through everything. I held some salts to her nose, and she presently opened her eyes. The Count went away, ashamed rather than grieved.

Two hours went by in perfect silence, Henriette holding my hand, and pressing it without being able to speak. Now and again she looked up to make me understand that she longed only for peace without a sound; then there was a moment's truce, when she raised herself on her elbow and murmured in my ear—

“Unhappy man! If you could but know——”

She laid her head on the pillow again. The remembrance of past sufferings, added to her present anguish, brought on again the nervous spasms, which I had soothed only by the magnetism of love—its effects were hitherto unknown to me, but I had used it instinctively. I now supported her with gentle and tender firmness, and she gave me such looks as brought tears to my eyes.

When the convulsive attack was over, I smoothed her disordered hair—the first and only time I ever touched it—then again I held her hand, and sat a long time looking at the room—a brown-and-gray room, with a bed simply hung with cotton chintz, a table covered with an old-fashioned toilet set, a poor sofa with a stitched mattress. What poetry I found here! What indifference to personal luxury! Her only luxury was exquisite neatness. The noble cell of

a married nun, stamped with holy resignation, where the only adornments were a crucifix by her bed, and over it the portrait of her aunt; then, on each side of the holy-water shell, sketches of her two children, done in pencil by herself, and locks of their hair when they were babies. What a hermitage for a woman whose appearance in the world of fashion would have cast the loveliest into the shade!

Such was the retreat where tears were so constantly shed by this daughter of an illustrious race, at this moment swamped in bitterness, and rejecting the love that might have brought her consolation. A hidden and irremediable misfortune! The victim in tears for the torturer, the torturer in tears for his victim.

When the children and the maid came in, I left her. The Count was waiting for me; he already regarded me as a mediator between his wife and himself; and he grasped my hands, exclaiming, "Stay with us; stay with us, Félix!"

"Unluckily," said I, "M. de Chessel has company; it would not do for his guests to wonder at the reason for my absence; but I will return after dinner."

He came out with me and walked to the lower gate without saying a word; then he accompanied me all the way to Frapesle, unconscious of what he was doing. When there, I said to him—

"In Heaven's name, M. le Comte, leave the management of your house to her if she wishes it, and do not torment her."

"I have not long to live," he replied seriously; "she will not suffer long on my account; I feel that my head will burst."

He turned away in a fit of involuntary egoism.

After dinner I went back to inquire for Mme. de Mortsauf, and found her better already. If these were for her the joys of marriage, if such scenes were to be frequently repeated, how could she live? What slow, unpunished murder! I had seen this evening the indescribable torture by which the Count racked his wife. Before what tribunal could such a case be brought?

These considerations bewildered me; I could say nothing

to Henriette, but I spent the night in writing to her. Of three or four letters that I wrote, I have nothing left but this fragment, which did not satisfy me; but though it seems to me to express nothing, or to say too much about myself when I ought only to have thought of her, it will show you the state of my mind.

*To Mme. de Mortsauf.*

“How many things I had to say to you this evening that I had thought of on the way and forgot when I saw you! Yes, as soon as I see you, dearest Henriette, I feel my words out of harmony with the reflections from your soul that add to your beauty. And, then, by your side, I feel such infinite happiness that the immediate experience effaces every memory of what has gone before. I am born anew each time to a larger life, like a traveler who, as he climbs a crag, discovers a new horizon. In every conversation with you I add some new treasure to my vast treasury. This, I believe, is the secret of long and indefatigable attachments. So I can only speak of you to yourself when I am away from you. In your presence I am too much dazzled to see you, too happy to analyze my happiness, too full of you to be myself, made too eloquent by you to speak to you, too eager to seize the present to be able to remember the past. Understand this constant intoxication, and you will forgive its aberrations. When I am with you I can only feel.

“Nevertheless, I will dare to tell you, dear Henriette, that never in all the joy you have given me, have I felt any rapture to compare with the delights that filled my soul yesterday when, after the dreadful storm, in which, with superhuman courage, you did battle with evil, you came back to me alone in the twilight of your room, whither the unfortunate scene had led me. I alone was there to know the light that can shine in a woman when she returns from the gates of death to the gates of life, and the dawn of a new birth tinges her brow. How harmonious was your voice! How trivial words seemed—even yours—as the vague recollection of past suffering made itself heard in your adored tones, mingled

with the divine consolations, by which you at last reassured me as you thus uttered your first thoughts! I knew that you shone with every choicest human gift, but yesterday I found a new Henriette, who would be mine if God should grant it. I had a glimpse yesterday of an inscrutable being, free from the bonds of the flesh, which hinder us from exhaling the fire of the soul. You were lovely in your dejection, majestic in your weakness.

"I found something yesterday more beautiful than your beauty, something sweeter than your voice, a light more glorious than the light of your eyes, a fragrance for which there is no name—yesterday your soul was visible and tangible. Oh! it was torment to me that I could not open my heart and take you into it to revive you. In short, I yesterday got over the respectful fear I have felt for you, for did not your weakness draw us nearer to each other? I learnt the joy of breathing as I breathed with you, when the spasm left you free to inhale our air. What prayers flew up to heaven in one moment! Since I did not die of rushing through the space I crossed to beseech God to leave you to me yet a while, it is not possible to die of joy or of grief.

"That moment has left, buried in my soul, memories which can never rise to the surface without bringing tears to my eyes; every joy will make the furrow longer, every grief will make it deeper. Yes; the fears that racked my soul yesterday will remain a standard of comparison for all my sorrows to come, as the happiness you have given me, dear perpetual first thought of my life, will prevail over every joy that the hand of God may ever vouchsafe me. You have made me understand Divine love, that trustful love which, secure in its strength and permanency, knows neither suspicion nor jealousy."

The deepest melancholy gnawed at my heart; the sight of this home was heartbreaking to a youth so fresh and new to social emotions—the sight, at the threshold of the world, of a bottomless gulf, a dead sea. This hideous concentration of woes suggested infinite reflections, and at my very first

steps in social life I had found a standard so immense that any other scenes could but look small when measured by it. My melancholy left M. and Mme. de Chessel to suppose that my love affair was luckless, so that I was happy in not injuring my noble Henriette by my passion.

On the following day, on going into the drawing-room, I found her alone. She looked at me for a moment, holding out her hand; she said, "Will the friend always persist in being too tender?" The tears rose to her eyes; she got up, and added in a tone of desperate entreaty, "Never write to me again in such a strain."

M. de Mortsauf was most friendly. The Countess had recovered her courage and her serene brow; but her pallor showed traces of yesterday's trouble which, though subdued, was not extinct.

In the evening, as we took a walk, the autumn leaves rustling under our feet, she said—

"Pain is infinite, joy has its limits," a speech which revealed the extent of her sufferings by comparison with her transient happiness.

"Do not calumniate life," said I. "You know nothing of love; there are delights which flame up to the heavens."

"Hush," said she, "I do not want to know them. A Greenlander would die in Italy! I am calm and happy in your society, I can tell you all my thoughts; do not destroy my confidence. Why should you not have the virtue of a priest and the charms of a free man?"

"You could make me swallow a cup of hemlock," said I, laying her hand on my heart, which was beating rapidly.

"Again!" said she, withdrawing her hand as if she felt some sudden pain. "Do you want to deprive me of the melancholy joy of feeling my bleeding wounds stanching by a friend's hand? Do not add to my miseries; you do not yet know them all, and the most secret are the hardest of all to swallow. If you were a woman, you would understand the distress and bitterness into which her proud spirit is plunged when she is the object of attentions which make up for nothing, and are supposed to make up for everything. For a few days now I shall be courted and petted; he will want to

be forgiven for having put himself in the wrong. I could now gain assent to the most unreasonable desires. And I am humiliated by this servility, by caresses which will cease as soon as he thinks I have forgotten everything. Is it not a terrible condition of life to owe the kindness of one's tyrant only to his errors——"

"To his crimes," I eagerly put in.

"Besides," she went on, with a sad smile, "I do not know how to make use of this temporary advantage. At this moment I am in the position of a knight who would never strike a fallen foe. To see the man I ought to honor on the ground, to raise him only to receive fresh blows, to suffer more from his fall than he himself does, and consider myself dishonored by taking advantage of a transient success, even for a useful end, to waste my strength, and exhaust all the resources of my spirit in these ignominious struggles, to rule only at the moment when I am mortally wounded?—Death is better!

"If I had no children, I should let myself be carried down the stream; but if it were not for my covert courage, what would become of them? I must live for them, however terrible life may be.—You talk to me of love! Why, my friend, only think of the hell I should fall into if I gave that man—ruthless, as all weak men are—the right to despise me? I could not endure a suspicion! The purity of my life is my strength. Virtue, my dear child, has holy waters in which we may bathe, and emerge born again to the love of God!"

"Listen, dear Henriette, I have only a week more to stay here, and I want——"

"What, you are leaving us?" said she, interrupting me.

"Well, I must know what my father has decided on for me. It is nearly three months——"

"I have not counted the days," she cried, with the vehemence of agitation. Then she controlled herself, and added, "Let us take a walk; we will go to Frapesle."

She called the Count and the children, and sent for a shawl; then, when all were ready, she, so deliberate and so calm, had a fit of activity worthy of a Parisian, and we

set out for Frapesle in a body, to pay a visit which the Countess did not owe.

She made an effort to talk to Mme. de Chessel, who, fortunately, was prolix in her replies. The Count and M. de Chessel discussed business. I was afraid lest M. de Mortsaufr should boast of his carriage and horses, but he did not fail in good taste.

His neighbor inquired as to the work he was doing at La Cassine and La Rhétorière. As I heard the question, I glanced at the Count, fancying he would avoid talking of a subject so full of painful memories and so bitter for him; but he demonstrated the importance of improving the methods of agriculture in the district, of building good farmhouses on healthy, well-drained spots; in short, he audaciously appropriated his wife's ideas. I gazed at the Countess and reddened. This want of delicacy in a man who, under certain circumstances, had so much, this oblivion of that direful scene, this adoption of ideas against which he had rebelled so violently, this belief in himself petrified me.

When M. de Chessel asked him—

“And do you think you will recover the outlay?”

“And more!” he exclaimed positively.

Such vagaries can only be explained by the word insanity. Henriette, heavenly soul, was beaming. Was not the Count showing himself to be a man of sense, a good manager, an admirable farmer? She stroked Jacques's hair in rapture, delighted for herself and delighted for her boy. What an odious comedy, what a sardonic farce!

At a later time, when the curtain of social life was raised for me, how many Mortsaufrs I saw, *minus* the flashes of chivalry and the religious faith of this man. What strange and cynical Power is that which constantly mates the madman with an angel, the man of genuine and poetic feelings with a mean woman, a little man with a tall wife, a hideous dwarf with a superb and beautiful creature; which gives the lovely Juana a Captain Diard—whose adventures at Bordeaux you already know; pairs Mme. de Beauséant with a d'Ajuda, Mme. d'Aiglemont with her husband, the Marquis d'Espard with his wife! I have, I confess, long sought the solution

of this riddle. I have investigated many mysteries, I have discovered the reasons for many natural laws, the interpretation of a few sacred hieroglyphics, but of this I know nothing; I am still studying it as if it were some Indian puzzle figure, of which the Brahmins have kept the symbolical purpose secret. Here the Spirit of Evil is too flagrantly the master, and I dare not accuse God. Irremediable disaster! who takes pleasure in plotting you? Can it be that Henriette and her unrecognized philosopher were right? Does their mysticism contain the general purport of the human race?

The last days I spent in this district were those of leafless autumn, darkened with clouds which sometimes hid the sky of Touraine, habitually clear and mild at that fine season of the year. On the day before I left, Mme. de Mortsau took me out on the terrace before dinner.

"My dear Félix," said she, after taking a turn in silence under the bare trees, "you are going into the world, and I shall follow you there in thought. Those who have suffered much have lived long. Never suppose that lonely spirits know nothing of the world; they see and judge it. If I am to live in my friend's life, I do not wish to be uneasy, either in his heart or in his conscience. In the heat of the fray it is sometimes very difficult to remember all the rules, so let me give you some motherly advice, as to a son.

"On the day when you leave, dear child, I will give you a long letter in which you will read my thoughts as a woman on the world, on men, on the way to meet difficulties in that great seething of interests. Promise me not to read it till you are in Paris. This entreaty is the expression of one of the sentimental fancies which are the secret of a woman's heart; I do not think it is possible to understand it, but perhaps we should be sorry if it were understood. Leave me these little paths where a woman loves to wander alone."

"I promise," said I, kissing her hands.

"Ah!" said she, "but I have another pledge to ask of you; but you must promise beforehand to take it."

"Oh, certainly!" said I, thinking it was some vow of fidelity.



"It has nothing to do with me," she said, with a bitter smile. "Félix, never gamble in any house whatever; I make no exception."

"I will never play," said I.

"That is well," said she. "I have found you a better use to make of the time you would spend at cards. You will see that while others are certain to lose sooner or later, you will always win."

"How?"

"The letter will tell you," she replied gayly, in a way to deprive her injunctions of the serious character which are given to those of our grandmothers.

The Countess talked to me for about an hour, and proved the depth of her affection by betraying how closely she had studied me during these three months. She had entered into the secret corners of my heart, trying to infuse her own into it; her voice was modulated and convincing, showing as much by the tone as by her words how many links already bound us to each other.

"If only you could know," she said in conclusion, "with what anxiety I shall follow you on your way, with what joy if you go straight, with what tears if you bruise yourself against corners! Believe me, my affection is a thing apart; it is at once involuntary and deliberately chosen. Oh! I long to see you happy, powerful, respected—you who will be to me as a living dream."

She made me weep. She was at once mild and terrible. Her feelings were too frankly expressed, and too pure to give the smallest hope to a man thirsting for happiness. In return for my flesh, left torn and bleeding in her heart, she shed on mine the unfailing and unblemished light of the divine love that can only satisfy the soul. She bore me up to heights whither the shining wings of the passion that had led me to kiss her shoulders could never carry me; to follow her flight a man would have needed to wear the white pinions of a seraph.

"On every occasion," said I, "I will think, 'What would my Henriette say?'"

"Yes, I want to be both the Star and the Sanctuary,"

said she, alluding to my childhood's dreams, and trying to realize them, so as to cheat my desires.

"You will be my religion, my light, my all," cried I.

"No," said she. "I can never be the giver of your pleasures."

She sighed, and gave me a smile of secret sorrow, the smile of a slave in an instant of revolt.

From that day forth she was not merely a woman I loved—she was all I loved best. She dwelt in my heart not as a woman who insists on a place there, whose image is stamped there by devotion or excess of pleasure; no, she had my whole heart, and was indispensable to the action of its muscles; she became what Beatrice was to the Florentine poet, or the spotless Laura to the Venetian—the mother of great thoughts, the unknown cause of saving determinations, my support for the future, the light that shines in darkness like a lily among somber shrubs. Yes, she dictated the firm resolve that cut off what was to be burned, that reinstated what was in danger; she endowed me with the fortitude of a Coligny to conquer the conquerors, to rise after defeat, to wear out the stoutest foe.

Next morning, after breakfasting at Frapesle, and taking leave of the hosts who had been so kind to the selfishness of my passion, I went to Clochegourde. M. and Mme. de Mortsauf had agreed to drive with me as far as Tours, whence I was to set out for Paris that night. On the way the Countess was affectionately silent; at first she said she had a headache; then she colored at the falsehood, and suddenly mitigated it by saying that she could not but regret to see me depart. The Count invited me to stay with them if, in the absence of the Chessels, I should ever wish to see the valley of the Indre once more. We parted heroically, with no visible tears; but, like many a sickly child, Jacques had a little emotional spasm which made him cry a little; while Madeleine, a woman already, clasped her mother's hand.

"Dear little man!" said the Countess, kissing Jacques passionately.

When I was left alone at Tours, after dinner I was seized by one of those inexplicable rages which only youth ever

goes through. I hired a horse, and in an hour and a quarter had ridden back the whole distance from Tours to Pont de Ruan. There, ashamed of letting my madness be seen, I ran down the road on foot, and stole under the terrace on tiptoe, like a spy. The Countess was not there; I fancied she might be ill. I had still the key of the little gate, and I went in. She was at that very moment coming down the steps with her two children, slowly and sadly, to revel in the tender melancholy of the landscape under the setting sun.

"Why, mother, here is Félix," said Madeleine.

"Yes, I myself," I whispered low. "I asked myself why I was at Tours when I could easily see you once more. Why not gratify a wish which, a week hence, will be beyond fulfillment?"

"Then he is not going away," cried Jacques, skipping and jumping.

"Be quiet, do," said Madeleine; "you will bring out the General!"

"This is not right," said the Countess. "What madness!"

The words, spoken through tears in her voice, were indeed a payment of what I may call usurious calculations in love!

"I had forgotten to return you this key," said I, with a smile.

"Then are you never coming back again?" said she.

"Can we ever be apart?" said I, with a look before which her eyelids fell to veil the mute reply.

I went away after a few minutes spent in the exquisite blankness of souls strung to the pitch at which excitement ends and frenzied ecstasy begins. I went away, walking slowly, and constantly looking back. When I gazed at the valley for the last time from the top of the down, I was struck by the contrast between its aspect now and when I first came to it: was it not then as green, as glowing, as my hopes and desires had sprung and glowed. Now, initiated into the dark and melancholy mysteries of a home, sharing the pangs of a Christian Niobe, as sad as she, my spirit overshadowed, I saw in the landscape, at this moment, the

hues of my ideas. The fields were cleared of their crops, the poplar leaves were falling, and those that remained were rust-color; the vine-canecan were burnt, the woods wore solemn tints of the russet which kings of yore adopted for their dress, disguising the purple of power under the brown hues of care. And, still in harmony with my thoughts, the valley under the dying yellow rays of the warm sun presented to me a living image of my soul.

To part from the woman we love is a very simple or a very dreadful thing, depending on one's nature; I suddenly felt myself in an unknown land of which I could not speak the language; I could find nothing to cling to, as I saw only things to which my soul was no longer attached. Then my love unfolded to its fullest extent, and my dear Henriette rose to her full dignity in the desert wherein I lived only by memories of her. It was an image so piously worshiped that I resolved to remain unspotted in the presence of my secret divinity, and in fancy I robed myself in the white garb of a Levite, imitating Petrarca, who never appeared in the presence of Laura but in white from head to foot.

With what impatience did I look forward to the first night when I should be under my father's roof, and might read the letter, which I kept feeling during my journey, as a miser feels a sum in banknotes that he is obliged to carry about with him. During the night I kissed the paper on which Henriette had expressed her will, where I should find the mysterious effluvium of her touch, when the tones of her voice would fall on my absorbed mental ear. I have never read her letters but as I read that first one, in bed, and in the deepest silence. I do not know how otherwise we can read the letters written by a woman we love; and yet there are men who mingle the reading of such letters with the business of daily life, taking them up and putting them down with odious coolness.

Here, then, Natalie, is the exquisite voice which suddenly sounded in the stillness of the night; here is the sublime figure which rose before me, pointing out the right road from the cross-ways where I now stood:—

“It is happiness, my friend, to be obliged to collect the

scattered fragments of my experience to transmit it to you and arm you against the perils of the world in which you must guide yourself with skill. I have felt the permitted joys of motherly affection while thinking of you for a few nights. While writing this, a sentence at a time, throwing myself forward into the life you are about to lead, I went now and again to my window. Seeing the turrets of Frapesle in the moonlight, I could say to myself, 'He is asleep, while I am awake for his sake,' a delightful emotion reminding me of the first happy days of my life when I watched Jacques asleep in his cradle, waiting for him to wake to feed him from my bosom. Did not you come to me as a child-man whose soul needed comforting by such precepts as you could not find to nourish it in those dreadful schools where you endured so much, and as we women have the privilege of affording you?

"These trifles will influence your success; they prepare and consolidate it. Will it not be a form of spiritual motherhood thus to create the system to which, as a man, you must refer the various acts of life, a motherhood well understood by the son? Dear Félix, permit me, even if I should make some mistakes, to give our friendship the seal of disinterestedness that will sanctify it; for in giving you up to the world, am I not foregoing every claim on you? But I love you well enough to sacrifice my own joys to your splendid future.

"For nearly four months you have led me to reflect strangely on the laws and habits that govern our time. The conversations I have held with my aunt, of which the purport must be given to you who have taken her place; the events of M. de Mortsauf's life as he has related them to me; my father's dicta, familiar as he was with the Court; the greatest and the smallest facts have risen up in my mind for the benefit of the adopted son whom I see now about to plunge, almost alone, into the throng of men; about to find himself without an adviser in a country where many perish by a heedless misuse of their best qualities, and some succeed by a clever use of their bad ones.

"Above all, reflect on the brief utterance of my opinion

on society considered as a whole—for to you a few words are enough. Whether social communities had a divine origin, or are the invention of man, I know not, nor do I know which way they are going; one thing seems certain, and that is: that they exist. As soon as you accept a social life instead of isolation, you are bound to adhere to its constitutional conditions, and to-morrow a sort of contract will be signed between it and you.

“Does society, as now constituted, get more benefit out of a man than it gives? I believe so; but if a man finds in it more burden than profit, or if he purchases too dearly the advantages he derives from it, these are questions for the legislator and not for the individual. You ought, in my opinion, to obey the general law in all things, without disputing it, whether it hurts or advances your interest. Simple as this principle may appear to you, it is not always easy of application; it is like the sap which must permeate the smallest capillary vessels to give life to a tree, to preserve its verdure, develop its bloom, and elaborate its fruit to a magnificence that excites general admiration. My dear, these laws are not all written in a book; customs also create laws; the most important are the least known; there are neither professors, nor treatises, nor any school of that law which guides your actions, your conversation, your external life, and the way in which you must appear in the world and meet fortune. If you sin against these unwritten laws, you must remain at the bottom of the social community instead of dominating it. Even though this letter should be full of echoes of your own thoughts, suffer me to set before you my woman’s policy.

“To formulate society by a theory of personal happiness, grasped at the cost of everybody else, is a disastrous doctrine which, strictly worked out, would lead a man to believe that everything he secretly appropriates, without any offense discernible by the law, by society, or by an individual, is fairly his booty or his due. If this were the charter, then a clever thief would be blameless, a wife faithless to her duties, but undetected, would be happy and good; kill a man, and so long as justice can find no proofs, if you have thus won a crown, like Macbeth, you have done well; your own interest

becomes the supreme law; the only question is to navigate, without witnesses or evidence, among the obstacles which law and custom have placed between you and your satisfaction. To a man who takes this view of society, my friend, the problem of making a fortune is reduced to playing a game where the stakes are a million or the galleys, a position in politics or disgrace. And, indeed, the green cloth is not wide enough for all the players; a sort of genius is necessary to calculate a *coup*.

"I say nothing of religious beliefs or feelings; we are concerned merely with the wheels of a machine of iron or of gold, and of the immediate results which men look for.

"Dear child of my heart, if you share my horror of this criminal theory, society will resolve itself in your eyes, as in every healthy mind, into a theory of duty. Yes, men owe service to each other under a thousand different forms. In my opinion, the duke and peer has far greater duties to the artisan or the pauper than the artisan or the pauper has to the duke. The obligations laid on us are greater in proportion to the benefits we derive from society, in accordance with the axiom—as true in commerce as in politics—that the burden of care is always in proportion to the profits accruing. Each one pays his debt in his own way. When our poor farmer at La Rhétorière comes home to bed, tired out with his labor, do you think he has not done his duty? He has undoubtedly fulfilled it better than many a man in a high position. Hence, in contemplating the world in which you desire a place suitable to your intelligence and your faculties, you must start with this maxim as fundamental principle—Never allow yourself to do anything against your own conscience, or against the public conscience. Though my insistency may seem to you superfluous, I beseech you—yes, your Henriette beseeches you—to weigh the full sense of these two words. Simple as they may seem, they mean, my dear, that uprightness, honor, loyalty, good breeding are the surest and quickest roads to fortune. In this selfish world there will be plenty of people to tell you that a man cannot get on by his feelings; that moral considerations, too tenaciously upheld, hamper his

progress; you will see ill-bred men, boorish or incapable of taking stock of the future, who will crush a smaller man, be guilty of some rudeness to an old woman, or refuse to endure a few minutes' boredom from an old man, saying they can be of no use; but later you will find these men caught by the thorns they have neglected to break, and missing fortune by a trifle; while another, who has early trained himself to this theory of duty, will meet with no obstacles. He may reach the top more slowly, but his position will be assured, and he will stand firm when others are tottering to a fall.

"When I add that the application of this principle demands, in the first place, a knowledge of manners, you will fancy perhaps that my jurisprudence smacks of the Court and of the teaching I brought from the house of the Lenoncourts. My dear friend, I attach the greatest importance to this training, trivial as it may seem. The manners of the best company are quite as indispensable as the varied and extensive knowledge you already possess; they have often taken its place! Some men, ignorant in fact, but gifted with mother-wit, and used to argue soundly from their ideas, have attained to greatness which has evaded the grasp of others, their superiors. I have watched you carefully, Félix, to see whether your education with other youths in various schools had spoilt anything in you. I discerned, with great joy, that you may easily assimilate what you lack—little enough, God knows! In many persons, though brought up in good traditions, manners are merely superficial; for perfect politeness and noble manners come from the heart and a lofty sense of personal dignity. This is why, in spite of their training, some men of birth are of very bad style, while others of humbler rank have a natural good taste, and need but a few lessons to acquire the best manners without clumsy imitation. Take the word of a poor woman who will never quit her valley—A noble tone, a gracious simplicity stamped on speech, action, and demeanor—nay, even on the details of a house—constitute a sort of personal poetry, and give an irresistible charm; judge then of their effect when they come from the heart.

"Politeness, dear child, consists in forgetting yourself



for others; with many people it is no more than a company grimace that fails as soon as self-interest is rubbed too hard and peeps through; then a great man is ignoble. But true politeness—and on this I insist in you, Félix—implies a Christian grace; it is the very flower of charity, and consists in really forgetting Self. In memory of Henriette, do not be a fountain without water, have the spirit as well as the form. Do not be afraid of finding yourself too often the dupe of this social virtue; sooner or later you will gather the harvest of so much seed cast apparently to the winds.

“My father remarked, long ago, that one of the most offensive things in superficial politeness is the misuse of promises. When you are asked to do something that is out of your power, refuse point-blank, and give no false hopes. On the other hand, give at once whatever you mean to grant; you will thus be credited with the grace of refusing as well as the grace of conferring a benefit—twofold honesty which really elevates the character. I am not sure that we do not earn more ill will by a hope deceived than good will by a favor bestowed.

“Above all, my friend—for such little things are all within my province, and I may emphasize the things I feel that I know—be neither confidential, nor commonplace, nor over-eager—three rocks ahead. Too much confiding in others diminishes their respect, the commonplace is despised, enthusiasm makes us a prey to adventurers. In the first place, dear child, do not have more than two or three friends in the whole course of your life, and your confidence is their right; if you give it to many, you betray them to each other. If you find yourself more intimate with some men than with others, be reserved about yourself, as reserved as though they were some day to be your rivals, your opponents, or your enemies; the chances of life require this. Preserve an attitude neither cold nor perfervid, try to hit the median line, on which a man may take his stand without compromising himself. Believe me, a man of heart is as far from Philinte’s feeble amiability as from Alceste’s harsh austerity. The genius of the comic poet shines in the suggestion of a happy

medium apprehended by a high-minded spectator; and certainly everyone will have a leaning to the absurdities of virtue rather than to the sovereign contempt that hides under the good-nature of egoism, but they will probably preserve themselves from either. As to commonplace civility, though it may make some simpletons pronounce you to be a charming man, those who are accustomed to gauge and value human intellects will estimate your capacity, and you will soon be neglected, for the commonplace is the resource of all weak men. Now, weak men are looked down upon by a world which regards its several members merely as organs—and perhaps it is right: Nature crushes out every ineffectual creature. Indeed, the kindly influence of women is perhaps the outcome of the pleasure they take in struggling with a blind power and asserting the triumph of the heart's perceptions over the brute strength of matter. But Society, a stepmother rather than a mother, adores the children who flatter her vanity.

“As for zeal, that first sublime error of youth which finds real enjoyment in expending its strength, and so begins by being its own dupe before it is duped by others, keep it for woman and for God. Never offer such treasures in the world's mart, nor in the speculations of politics; they will only give you paste for them. You surely must believe the adviser who enjoins noble conduct on you in every particular, when she implores you not to waste yourself in vain; for, unfortunately, men will esteem you in proportion to your usefulness, taking no account of your real worth. To use a figure of speech which will abide in your poetic mind: A cipher, though it be never so large, traced in gold or written in chalk, will never be anything but a cipher. A man of our day said—‘Never show zeal!’ Zeal verges on trickery, it leads to misunderstandings; you would never find a fervor to match your own in anyone above you; kings, like women, think that everything is due to them. Sad as this principle may seem, it is true; but it need not blight the soul. Place your purest feelings in some inaccessible spot where their flowers may be passionately admired, where the artist may lovingly dream over the masterpiece.

"Duties, my friend, are not feelings. To do what you ought is not to do what you please. A man must be ready to die in cold blood for his country, but may give his life for a woman with joy.

"One of the most important rules in the science of manners is almost absolute silence concerning yourself. Allow yourself, for the amusement of it, some day to talk about yourself to some mere acquaintances; tell them of your ailments, your pleasures, or your business, you will see indifference supervene on affected interest; then, when they are utterly bored, if the mistress of the house does not politely check you, everyone will find a clever excuse to withdraw. But if you want to collect about you every man's sympathies, to be regarded as an agreeable and witty man, always pleasant, talk to them of themselves, find an opportunity for bringing them to the front—even by asking questions apparently irrelevant to the individual. Heads will bow, lips will smile at you, and when you have left, everyone will sing your praises. Your conscience and the voice of your heart will warn you of the limit where the cowardice of flattery begins, where the grace of conversation ends.

"One word more about talking in public. My friend, youth is always inclined to a certain hastiness of judgment which does it honor, but which serves it ill. Hence the silence which used to be impressed on the young, who went through an apprenticeship to their betters, during which they studied life; for, of old, the nobility had their apprentices as artists had, pages attached to the master who maintained them. In these days young people have a sort of hothouse training, sour at that, which leads them to judge severely of actions, thoughts, and books; they cut rashly, and with a new knife. Do not indulge in this bad habit. Your condemnation would be such censure as would hurt many of those about you, and they would all perhaps be less ready to forgive a secret wound than an offense given in public. Young men are not indulgent, because they do not know life and its difficulties. An old critic is kind and mild, a young critic is merciless, for he knows nothing; the other knows all. And then there is at the back of every human action a labyrinth of determining causes, of

which God has reserved to Himself the right of final judgment. Be severe only to yourself.

“Your fortune lies before you, but nobody in this world can make a fortune unaided. My father’s house is open to you; visit there frequently; the connections you will form there will be of use to you in a thousand ways. But do not yield an inch of ground to my mother; she crushes those who bend, and admires the spirit of those who resist her. She is like iron which, when hammered, can be welded with iron, but by its mere contact breaks everything less hard than itself. But cultivate my mother’s acquaintance; if she likes you, she will introduce you to houses where you will pick up the inevitable knowledge of the world, the art of listening, speaking, replying, coming in, and going away; the tone of speech, the indescribable something, which is not superiority any more than the coat is genius, but without which the greatest talents are never acceptable. I know you well enough to be sure that I am not deluding myself when I picture you beforehand just what I wish you to be—simple in manner, gentle in tone, proud without conceit, deferent to old people, obliging without servility, and, above all, discreet. Use your wit, but not merely to amuse your company, for you must remember that if your superiority irritates a commonplace man, he will be silent; but he will afterwards speak of you as ‘most amusing,’ a word of scorn. Your superiority must always be leonine. Indeed, do not try to please men. In your intercourse with them I would recommend a coolness verging on such a degree of impertinence as cannot offend them; every man respects those who look down on him, and such contempt will win you the favor of women, who value you in proportion to your indifference to men. Never be familiar with persons in discredit, not even if they do not merit their reputation, for the world exacts an account alike of our friendships and our aversions; on this point let your judgment be slowly and fully matured, but irrevocable.

“If men to whom you will have nothing to say justify your aversion, your esteem will be valued; and thus you will inspire that unspoken respect which raises a man above his fellows. Thus you will be armed with youth to attract,

grace to charm, and prudence to preserve your conquests. And all I have said may be summed up in the old motto '*Noblesse oblige.*'

"Now apply these principles to the policy of business. You will hear many men declare that craft is the element of success, that the way to push through the crowd is by dividing it to make room. My friend, these principles held good in the dark ages, when princes had to use rival forces to destroy each other; but in these days everything is open to the day, and such a system would serve you very ill. You will always meet men face to face; either an honest gentleman, or a treacherous foe, a man whose weapons are calumny, slander, and dishonesty. Well, understand that against him you have no better ally than himself; he is his own enemy; you can fight with him with the weapons of loyalty; sooner or later he will conciliate his esteem; and when your interests are reconciled—for everything can be arranged—he will be of service to you. Do not be afraid of making enemies; woe to him who has none in the world you will move in! But try never to give a handle to ridicule or discredit. I say *try*, for in Paris a man is not always free to act; he is liable to inevitable circumstances; you cannot escape mud from the gutter, nor a falling tile. There are gutters in the moral world, and those who fall try to splash nobler men with the mud in which they are drowning. But you can always command respect by showing yourself invariably relentless in your final decision.

"In this conflict of ambitions, and amid these tangled difficulties, always go straight to the point; resolutely attack the question, and never fight more than one point with all your strength. You know M. de Mortsauf hated Napoleon; he persistently cursed him, he watched him as the police watch a criminal, every evening he called out on him for the Duc d'Enghien's death—the only disaster, the only death that ever wrung tears from him; well, he admired him as the boldest of leaders, and often expatiated on his tactics. Cannot a similar strategy be applied in the war of interests? It would economize time, as Napoleon's economized men and space. Think this over, for a woman is often

mistaken about such things, judging only by feeling and instinct.

"On one point I may confidently insist: all trickery and craft is certain to be detected, and does harm in the end, whereas every crisis seems to me less perilous when a man takes his stand on plain-dealing. If I may quote myself as an example, I may tell you that at Clochegourde, forced by M. de Mortsauf's temper to be on my guard against any litigation, and to have every question settled at once by arbitration, lest it should become a sort of illness to him which he would enjoy giving himself up to, I have always settled matters myself by going straight to the point and saying to my opponent, 'Untie the knot or cut it.'

"You will often find yourself of use to others, doing them some service, and getting small thanks; but do not imitate those who complain, and declare that they have met with nothing but ingratitude. Is not that putting one's self on a pedestal? And is it not rather silly to confess one's scant knowledge of the world? And do you do good as an usurer lends money? Will you not do it for its own sake? *Noblesse oblige!* At the same time, do not render men such service as compels them to be grateful, for then they will become your inplacable enemies; there is a despair of obligation as there is a despair of ruin, which gives incalculable strength. On the other hand, accept as little as you can. Do not become the vassal of any living soul; depend on yourself alone.

"I can only advise, dear friend, as to the minor matters of life. In the political world everything has a different aspect, the rules that guide your personal conduct must bow to higher interests. But if you should reach the sphere in which great men have their being, you, like God, will be sole judge of your decisions. You will be more than a man, you will be the embodiment of the law; you will be more than an individual, you will represent the nation incarnate. But though you will judge, you will also be judged. In later times you will be called to appear before the Ages, and you know history well enough to appreciate what the feelings and deeds are which lead to true greatness.

"I now come to the serious point—your conduct to women. In the drawing-rooms where you will visit make it a law to yourself never to squander yourself by indulging in the trivialities of flirtation. One of the men of the last century, who was in every way most successful, made it a practice never to devote himself but to one lady in an evening, and to select those who seemed forlorn. That man, my dear boy, was supreme in his day. He had shrewdly calculated that in due time he would be persistently praised by everybody. Most young men lose their most precious possession, the time, namely, which is needful for making the connections which are half of social life. While they are intrinsically attractive they would have little to do to attach others to their interests; but that springtime is brief—make the most of it. Cultivate the society of influential women. Influential women are old women; they will inform you as to the alliances and secrets of every family, and show you the cross-roads that may take you quickly to the goal. They will be really fond of you; patronage is their last passion when they are not bigots; they will be of invaluable service, they will speak well of you, and make other people want to know you.

"Avoid young women! Do not think that there is the least personal animus in this advice. The woman of fifty will do everything for you, the woman of twenty, nothing; she will demand your whole life; the elder woman will only ask for a moment, a little attention. Jest with young women, take them very lightly, they are incapable of a serious thought. Young women, my dear, are selfish, petty, incapable of true friendship; they only love themselves, and would sacrifice you for a success. Besides, they will require your full devotion, and your position will need the devotion of others—two irreconcilable propositions. No young woman will understand your interests; they will always be thinking of themselves, not of you, and do you more harm by their vanity than good by their attachment; they will unhesitatingly appropriate your time; they will mar your fortune, and ruin you with the best grace in the world. If you complain, the silliest of them all can argue that her glove is worth the universe, that nothing can be more glorious than her service.

‘They will all tell you that they can give you happiness, and so make you forget your high destiny. The happiness they give is variable; your future greatness is certain.

“You do not know with what perfidious art they go about to gratify their caprices, to make a transient liking appear as a passion begun on earth to be eternal in heaven. When they throw you over, they will tell you that the words, ‘I love you no longer,’ justify their desertion, as the words, ‘I love you,’ justified their love—love that is irresponsible. My dear, the doctrine is absurd. Believe me, true love is eternal, infinite, always the same; equable and pure without vehement outbreaks; it is found under white hairs when the heart is still young. Nothing of the kind is to be found in women of fashion; they only act the part.

“This one will interest you by her sorrows, and seem the sweetest and least exacting of her sex; but when she has made herself necessary, she will gradually domineer over you and make you do her bidding; you will wish to be a diplomate, to go and come, to study men, interests, and foreign lands.—No, you must stay in Paris or at her country-house, she will ingeniously tie you to her apron-string, and the more devoted you are the less grateful will she be. That one will try to engage you by her submissiveness; she would be your page and follow you romantically to the ends of the earth; she would compromise herself for your sake—and hang like a stone round your neck. Thus one day you will be drowned, but she will come to the top.

“The least crafty of their sex have endless snares; the stupidest triumph by exciting no suspicions; the least dangerous of them all would be an audacious flirt who would fall in love with you, hardly knowing why, who would desert you without reason, and take you up again out of vanity. But they will all do you a mischief sooner or later. Every young woman who goes into the world and lives on pleasure and the triumphs of vanity is half corrupt, and will corrupt you.

“That is not the chaste, meditative being in whose heart you may reign forever. Nay, the woman who loves you will dwell in solitude, her highest festivals will be your looks, and she will feed on your words. Then let that woman be all the



world to you, for you are all in all to her; love her truly, give her no pain, no rival, do not torture her jealousy. To be loved, my dear, and understood is the highest happiness. I only wish that you may know it; but do not compromise the first bloom of your soul; be very sure of the heart to which you give your affections. That woman must never be herself, never think of herself, but of you alone; she will never contradict you, she will not listen to her own interests; she will scent danger for you when you do not suspect it, and forget her own; if she suffers, she will endure without complaining; she will have no personal vanity, but she will respect what you love in her. Return such love with even greater love.

“And if you should be so happy as to find, what your poor friend here can never have, an affection equally inspired and equally felt, however perfect that love may be, remember still that in a valley there lives for you a mother whose heart is so deeply mined by the feeling with which you fill it, that you can never reach the bottom of it.

“Yes, you can never know the extent of the affection I bear you: for it to show its full extent you would have had to be bereft of your noble intellect; you cannot think how far my devotion would have carried me then. Do you doubt me when I bid you avoid young women, who are all more or less superficial, sarcastic, vain, frivolous, and wasteful, and attach yourself to important dowagers, full of sense, as my aunt was, who will do you good service, who will defend you against secret calumny by quashing it, who will speak of you in terms you cannot use in speaking of yourself? After all, am I not generous when I bid you reserve your worship for the pure-hearted angel to come? If the words *Noblesse oblige* include a great part of my first injunctions, my advice as to your dealings with women may also be summed up in this chivalrous motto, ‘*Les servir toutes, n’en aimer qu’une*’ (Serve all, love but one).

“Your learning is vast; your heart, preserved by suffering, is still unspotted, all is fair and good in you: then *Will!* Your whole future lies in that one word, the watchword of great men. You will obey your Henriette, my child, will you not, and allow her still to tell you what she thinks of you

and your doings in the world? I have a 'mind's eye' which can foresee the future for you, as for my children; then let me make use of the faculty for your benefit; it is a mysterious gift which has brought peace into my life; and which, far from waning, grows stronger in solitude and silence.

"In return, I ask you to give me a great joy; I want to see you growing great among men without having to frown over one of your successes; I want you very soon to raise your fortune to a level with your name, and to be able to tell me that I have contributed something more than a wish to your advancement. This secret co-operation is the only pleasure I can allow myself. I can wait.

"I do not say farewell. We are divided, you cannot press my hand to your lips; but you must surely have understood the place you fill in the heart of your

"HENRIETTE."

As I finished reading this letter, I seemed to feel a motherly heart throbbing beneath my fingers at the moment when I was still frozen by my mother's stern reception. I could guess why the Countess had forbidden me to read this letter so long as I was in Touraine; she had feared, no doubt, to see me fall with my head at her feet, and to feel them wetted by my tears.

At last I made the acquaintance of my brother Charles, who had hitherto been a stranger to me; but he showed such arrogance in our most trifling intercourse as held us too far apart for us to care for each other as brothers. All kindly feeling is based on equality of mind, and there was no point of contact between us. He lectured me solemnly on various trivial details which the mind or the heart knows by instinct; he always seemed distrustful of me; if my love had not been to me as a corner-stone, he might have made me awkward and stupid by seeming to think that I knew nothing. He, nevertheless, introduced me into society, where my rusticity was to be a foil to his accomplishment. But for the woes of my childhood, I might have taken his patronizing vanity for brotherly affection; but mental isolation produces the same

effects as earthly solitude: the silence allows us to discern the faintest echo, and the habit of relying on one's self develops a sensitiveness so delicate that it vibrates to the lightest touch of the affections that concern us.

Before knowing Mme. de Mortsauf a stern look hurt me, the tone of a rough word went to my heart; I groaned over it, though I knew nothing of the gentler life of caresses. Whereas, on my return from Clochegourde, I could draw comparisons which gave completeness to my premature knowledge. Observation based on mere suffering is incomplete. Happiness has its lights too. But I allowed myself to be crushed under Charles's superiority as my elder, all the more readily because I was not his dupe.

I went alone to the Duchesse de Lenoncourt's house, and heard no mention made of Henriette; no one but the good old Duke, who was simplicity itself, ever spoke of her; but, from the reception he gave me, I guessed that his daughter had secretly recommended me.

Hardly had I begun to get over the loutish surprise which a first sight of the great world produces in every tyro, when, just as I was getting a glimpse of the resources it has for ambitious men, and thinking of the joy of practicing Henriette's axioms, while recognizing their entire truth, the events of the twentieth of March supervened. My brother accompanied the Court to Ghent, and I, by the Countess's advice—for I kept up a correspondence with her, frequent on my side only—I also went thither with the Duc de Lenoncourt. His habitual benevolence became a sincere desire to help me when he found that I was devoted head, heart, and hands to the Bourbons; he presented me to His Majesty.

The courtiers of disaster are few. Youth has artless enthusiasms and disinterested fidelity; the King was a judge of men; what would have passed unnoticed at the Tuileries was conspicuous at Ghent, and I was so happy as to find favor with Louis XVIII.

A letter from Mme. de Mortsauf to her father, brought with some dispatches by an emissary of the Vendéens, contained a scrap for me, informing me that Jacques was ill. M. de Mortsauf, in despair alike at his son's frail health,

and at a second emigration of the Sovereign, in which he had no part, had added a few lines that enabled me to imagine my dear lady's situation. Fretted by him, no doubt, for spending all her time by Jacques's bedside, getting no rest day or night, scorning such vexations, but incapable of controlling herself when she was expending herself wholly in nursing her child, Henriette must be needing the support of a friendship that had made life less burdensome to her, if it were only by amusing M. de Mortsauf. Several times already I had got the Count out for a walk when he was threatening to worry her—an innocent trick of which the success had earned me some of those looks expressing passionate gratitude, and in which love reads a promise. Though I was eager to follow in the footsteps of my brother Charles, recently sent to the Congress at Vienna; though, at the risk of my life even, I longed to justify Henriette's predictions and free myself from being his vassal, my ambition, my desire for independence, my interests, which bid me remain with the King, all paled before Mme. de Mortsauf's heart-stricken image. I decided on leaving the Court at Ghent, and on going to serve my true sovereign.

God rewarded me. The messenger sent out by the Vendéens could not return to France; the King wanted a man who would devote himself to be the bearer of his instructions. The Duc de Lenoncourt knew that His Majesty would not overlook the man who should undertake this perilous task; without consulting me, he obtained it for me, and I accepted it, only too glad to be able to return to Clochegourde while serving the good cause.

Thus, after having an audience of the King, at one-and-twenty, I returned to France, where, either in Paris or in La Vendée, I was to be so happy as to do His Majesty's bidding. By the end of May, being the object of pursuit to the Bonapartists who were on my track, I was obliged to fly; affecting to make my way homewards, I went on foot from place to place, from wood to wood, across Upper Vendée, the Bocage, and Poitou, changing my route as circumstances required.

I thus reached Saumur; from Saumur I went to Chinon, and from Chinon, in a single night, I arrived in the woods of

Neuil, where I met the Count, on horseback, on a common; he took me up behind him and carried me home, without our meeting a soul who could recognize me.

"Jacques is better," was his first speech.

I explained to him my position as a diplomatic infantryman, hunted like a wild animal, and the gentleman rose up in him, in arms to dispute with Chessel the risk of harboring me.

When I saw Clochegourde I felt as if the eight past months were but a dream. The Count said to his wife as we entered, "Guess who is come with me!—Félix."

"Is it possible?" she said, her arms hanging limp, and looking quite amazed.

I came in; we stood, both immovable, she riveted to her seat, on the threshold, gazing at each other with the fixed avidity of two lovers who want to make up in one look for lost time. But she, ashamed of her surprise, which laid her heart bare, rose, and I went forward.

"I have prayed much for you," said she, holding out her hand for me to kiss.

She asked for news of her father; then, understanding my fatigue, she went to arrange a room for me, while the Count had some food brought, for I was dying of hunger. My room was over hers, that which had been her aunt's; she left me to be taken to it by the Count, after setting foot on the bottom step of the stairs, considering no doubt whether she should show me the way herself; I turned round, she colored, wished me a sound nap, and hastily withdrew. When I came down to dinner I heard of the defeat at Waterloo, of Napoleon's flight, the march of the allies on Paris, and the probable return of the Bourbons. To the Count these events were everything; to us they were nothing.

Do you know what the greatest news was after I had greeted the children, for I will say nothing of my alarm on seeing how pale and thin the Countess was? I knew the dismay I might produce by a gesture of surprise, and expressed nothing but pleasure at seeing her.—The great news for us was, "You will have some ice."

She had often been annoyed last year because she had no

water cold enough for me; for, drinking nothing else, I liked it iced. God knows what it had cost her in importunities to have an ice-house built. You, better than anyone, know that love is satisfied with a word, a look, a tone of voice, an attention apparently most trifling; its highest privilege is to be its own evidence. Well, this word, with her look and her pleasure, revealed to me the extent of her sentiments, as I had formerly shown her mine by my conduct over the backgammon.

But there was no end to the artless proofs of her tenderness. By the seventh day after my arrival she was quite herself again; she was sparkling with health, glee, and youth; I found my beloved Lily more beautiful, more fully developed, just as I found all my heart's treasures increased. Is it not a narrow soul only, or a vulgar heart, which finds that absence diminishes feeling, effaces the impression of the soul, and deteriorates the beauty of the person beloved? To an ardent imagination, to those beings in whom enthusiasm flows in their blood, dyeing it with a fresher purple, and in whom passion takes on the form of constancy, has not absence such an effect as the torments which fortified the faith of early Christians and made God visible to them? Are there not, in a heart full of love, certain undying hopes which give a higher value to the image we desire by showing it in glimpses tinged by the glow of dreams? Can we not feel such promptings as lend the beauty of an ideal to those adored features by informing them with thought? The past, remembered bit by bit, is magnified; the future is furnished with hopes. Between two hearts overcharged with such electric tension, the first interview is then like a beneficent storm which revives the earth and fertilizes it, while shedding on it the flashing gleams of the lightning. How much exquisite pleasure I tasted in finding that in us these thoughts, these experiences were reciprocal! With what rapture did I watch the growth of happiness in Henriette!

A woman who resuscitates under the eyes of the man she loves gives a greater proof of feeling perhaps than one who dies, killed by a suspicion, or withered on the stem for lack of nutrition. Which of the two is the more pathetic I can-

not tell. Mme. de Mortsauf's revival was as natural as the effect of the month of May on the meadows, or of sunshine and shower on drooping plants. Like our Vale of Love, Henriette had gone through her winter; like it, she was born anew with the spring.

Before dinner we went down to our beloved terrace. There, as she stroked the head of her poor child, weaker now than I had ever seen him, while he walked by her side in silence as though he were sickening for some disease, she told me of the nights she had spent by his sick-bed. For those three months, she said, she had lived exclusively in herself; she had dwelt, as it were, in a gloomy palace, dreading to enter the rooms where lights were blazing, where banquets were given that were forbidden to her; she had stood at the open door with one eye on her child, and the other on a vague face, with one ear listening to sorrow, and the other hearing a voice. She spoke in poems, suggested by solitude, such as no poet has ever written; and all quite simply, without knowing that there might be the slightest trace of love or taint of voluptuous thought, or of Oriental sweetness like a rose of Frangistan. When the Count joined us she went on in the same tone, as a wife proud of herself, who can look her husband boldly in the face, and kiss her son's brow without a blush.

She had prayed much, holding her clasped hands over Jacques for whole nights, *willing* that he should not die.

"I went up to the gates of the sanctuary," said she, "to ask his life of God."

And she had seen visions; she repeated them to me; but when she presently said in her angel's voice these wonderful words, "When I slept, my heart kept watch!"—"That is to say, you were almost crazy," said the Count, interrupting her.

She was silenced, as if this was the first blow she had ever had, as if she had forgotten that for thirteen years this man had never failed to aim an arrow at her heart. Like a glorious bird, she was stayed in her flight by this clumsy bullet; she fell into a mood of dull dejection.

"Dear me, monsieur," said she, after a pause, "will

nothing I say ever find favor before the bar of your wit? Will you never have pity on my weakness, nor any sympathy with my womanly fancies?"

She paused. This angel already repented of having murmured, and sounded the past and the future alike at a glance. Could she be understood, had she not provoked some virulent retort? The blue veins throbbed strongly in her temples; she shed no tears, but her green eyes lost their color; then she looked down to the ground to avoid seeing in mine the exaggeration of her suffering, her own feelings guessed by me, her soul cherished in mine, and, above all, the sympathy, crimsoned by young love, that was ready, like a faithful dog, to fly at anyone who should offend his mistress without measuring the force or the dignity of the foe. At such a moment the airs of superiority assumed by the Count were a thing to see; he fancied he had triumphed over his wife, and battered her with a hailstorm of words, reiterating the same idea again and again, like the blows of an ax repeating the same sound.

"So he is the same as ever?" I said when the Count left us, called away by the stableman who came to fetch him.

"Always!" replied Jacques.

"Always most kind, my boy," said she to Jacques, trying to screen M. de Mortsauf from the criticism of his children. "You see the present, you know nothing of the past; you cannot judge of your father without some injustice; and even if you were so unhappy as to see your father in the wrong, the honor of the family would require you to bury such secrets in the deepest silence."

"How are the improvements going on at La Cassine and La Rhétorière?" I asked, to turn her mind from these bitter reflections.

"Beyond my hopes," she replied. "The buildings being finished, we found two capital farmers, who took one at a rent of four thousand five hundred francs, we paying the taxes, and the other at five thousand; the leases for fifteen years. We have already planted three thousand young trees on the two new farms. Manette's cousin is delighted with La



Rabelaye; Martineau has La Baude. The return on the four farms is chiefly in hay and wood, and they do not fatten the soil, as some dishonest farmers do, with the manure intended for the arable land. So our efforts are crowned with complete success. Clochegourde, apart from what we call the home farm, from our woods and the vineyards, brings in nineteen thousand francs, and the plantations will in time yield us an annuity. I am struggling now to get the home farm placed in the hands of our keeper, Martineau, whose place could be filled by his son. He offers a rental of three thousand francs if M. de Mortsauf will only build him a house at La Commanderie. We could then clear the approach to Clochegourde, finish the proposed avenue to the Chinon road, and have nothing in our own hands but the wood and the vineyards. If the King returns, we shall have our pension again, and we shall accept it after a few days' contest with our wife's common-sense! Thus Jacques's fortune will be perfectly secure. When we have achieved this result, I shall leave it to Monsieur to save for Madeleine, and the King will endow her too, as is customary. My conscience is at peace, my task is nearly done.—And you?" she asked.

I explained my mission, and showed her how wise and fruitful her advice had been. Had she been gifted with second sight to foresee events so accurately?

"Did I not say so in my letter?" replied she. "But it is only for you that I can exercise that strange faculty, of which I have spoken to no one but M. de la Berge, my director; he explains it by divine intervention. Often, after any deep meditation to which my fears for the children have given rise, my eyes used to close to the things of this world and awake to another realm. When I saw Jacques and Madeleine as luminous figures, they were well for some little time; when I saw them wrapped in mist, they soon after fell ill. As for you, not only do I always see you radiant, but I hear a soft voice telling me what you ought to do—without words, by spiritual communication. By what law is it that I can use this marvelous faculty only for my children's behoof and yours?" she went on, becoming thoughtful.

"Is it that God means to be a father to them?" she added, after a pause.

"Allow me to believe that I obey you alone," said I.

She gave me one of those whole-hearted, gracious smiles which so intoxicated my soul that I should not in such a moment have felt a death-blow.

"As soon as the King reaches Paris, go there, leave Clochegourde," she said. "Degrading as it is to sue for place and favor, it is, on the other hand, ridiculous not to be at hand to accept them. There will be great changes. The King will need capable and trustworthy men; do not fail him. You will find yourself in office while still young, and you will benefit by it; for statesmen, as for actors, there is a certain routine of business which no genius can divine; it must be taught. My father learned that from the Duc de Choiseul.—Think of me," she added, after a pause; "let me enjoy the pleasures of superiority in a soul that is all my own. Are you not my son?"

"Your son?" I said sullenly.

"Nothing but my son," said she, mimicking me. "And is not that a good enough place to hold in my heart?"

The bell rang for dinner, she took my arm, leaning on it with evident pleasure.

"You have grown," she said, as we went up the steps. When we reached the top she shook my arm as if my fixed gaze held her too eagerly; though her eyes were downcast, she knew full well that I looked at her alone, and she said in her tone of affected impatience, so gracious and so insinuating—

"Come, let us look at our favorite valley!"

She turned, holding her white silk parasol over our heads, and clasping Jacques closely to her side; the movement of her head by which she directed my attention to the Indre, to the punt, and the fields, showed me that since my visit and our walks together she had made herself familiar with those misty distances and hazy curves. Nature was the cloak that had sheltered her thoughts; she knew now what the nightingale sobs over at night, and what the marsh-bird repeats in its plaintive droning note.

At eight o'clock that evening I was present at a scene which touched me deeply, and which I had never before witnessed, because I had always remained to play with M. de Mortsauf while she went into the dining-room before putting the children to bed. A bell rang twice, and all the house-servants appeared.

"You are our guest; will you submit to convent rule?" she asked, leading me away by the hand with the look of innocent gayety that is characteristic of all truly pious women.

The Count followed us. Masters, children, and servants, all knelt bareheaded in their accustomed places. It was Madeleine's turn to say prayers; the dear child did it in her thin, young voice, its artless tones clearly audible in the harmonious country silence, and giving each phrase the holy purity of innocence, that angelic grace. It was the most touching prayer I ever heard. Nature whispered a response to the child's words in the myriad low rustlings of the evening hour, an accompaniment as of an organ softly played.

Madeleine was on her mother's right hand, Jacques on the left. The pretty curly heads, and, rising between them, the mother's plaits of hair; above them, again, M. de Mortsauf's perfectly white hair and ivory yellow skull, formed a picture of which the coloring seemed to repeat to the mind the idea suggested by the melody of prayer; and to fulfill the conditions of unity which stamp the Sublime, the devout little assembly was wrapped in the subdued light of sunset, while the room was touched with the red beams. The poetical, or the superstitious soul, could thus imagine that the fires of heaven were shed on the faithful worshipers kneeling there before God without distinction of rank, all equals, as the Church requires. My thoughts reverted to patriarchal times, and my fancy gave added dignity to the scene, itself so grand in its simplicity. The children bid their father good-night, the servants bowed, the Countess went away, each child holding a hand, and I went back to the drawing-room with the Count.

"You will have found salvation there and perdition here," said he, pointing to the backgammon board.

The Countess joined us in about half an hour, and brought her work frame to the table.

"This is for you," said she, unrolling the canvas; "but the work has hung fire these three months past. Between that red carnation and that rose my poor boy was very ill."

"Come, come," said M. de Mortsauf; "do not talk about it. *Size-cinq*, Master King's messenger."

When I went to my room, I sat motionless to hear her moving about below. Though she was calm and pure, I was tormented by crazy ideas and intolerable cravings.

"Why could she not be mine?" thought I. "Perhaps she, like me, is tossed on the whirlwind of the senses?"

At one o'clock I crept downstairs, treading without a sound, and outside her door I lay down; with my ear to the crack I heard her soft and even breathing, like a child's. When I was quite chilled, I went up again and to bed, where I slept quietly till morning.

To what predestination, to what taint of nature can I ascribe the pleasure I find in going to the edge of a precipice, in sounding the abyss of evil, in peering into its depths, shuddering at the chill, and drawing back in anguish. That hour at night spent on the threshold of her door, where I wept with frenzy, without her ever knowing on the morrow that she had trodden on my tears and my kisses—wept over her virtue, ruined and respected by turns, cursed and then worshiped—that hour, a madness in the eyes of many persons, was an inspiration of the same nameless feeling that carries on a soldier. Men have told me that in such a mood they have risked their life, rushing in front of a battery to see whether they would escape the grape-shot, and whether they would not enjoy thus trying to leap the gulf of probabilities, like Jean Bart smoking while he sat on a powder barrel.

On the following day I went out and gathered two nose-gays; the Count admired them—the Count, who cared for nothing of the kind, and for whom Champenetz's jest seemed to have been invented: "He builds dungeons in the air!"

I spent several days at Clochegourde, paying short calls only at Frapesle, where I dined, however, three times. The French army took up its quarters at Tours. Though I was evidently life and health to Mme. de Mortsauf, she entreated me to get to Châteauroux and return as fast as possible to Paris through Issoudun and Orleans. I tried to rebel; she insisted, saying that her familiar had counseled her; I obeyed. Our parting this time was watered with tears; she was afraid of the captivations of the world I was about to live in. Should I not have to enter seriously into the whirl of interests, of passions, of pleasures, which make Paris an ocean fraught with perils no less to chaste affections than to a clear conscience? I promised her that I would write her every evening the events and the thoughts of the day. At this promise she laid her weary head on my shoulder and said—

“Omit nothing; everything will interest me.”

She gave me letters to the Duke and Duchess, on whom I called the day after my arrival.

“You are in luck,” said the Duke. “Dine here and come with me to the palace this evening; your fortune is made. The King mentioned your name this morning, adding, ‘He is young, able, and faithful.’ And the King regretted not knowing whether you were dead or alive, and whither the course of events had led you after you had so well fulfilled your mission.”

That evening I was a Master of Appeals to the Council of State, and was appointed to certain secret employment for the King—a confidential post which was to be permanent so long as he should reign, not splendid in appearance, but with no risk of overthrow, and which placed me at the heart of Government, and was, in fact, the foundation of all my prosperity.

Mme. de Mortsauf had seen clearly, and I owed everything to her: power and wealth, happiness and knowledge; she guided and purified my heart, and gave my purpose that unity without which the powers of youth are vainly frittered away. At a later date I had a colleague. Each of us was on service for six months at a time. We could at need take

each other's place; we had a room in the palace, a carriage at our command, and a handsome allowance for expenses when called upon to travel.

It was a strange position! We were the secret disciples of a monarch to whose policy his enemies have since done signal justice; we heard his judgment on all matters internal and foreign; we had no acknowledged influence, but were occasionally consulted, as Laforêt was consulted by Molière, and we heard the hesitancy of long experience corrected by the conscience of youth.

Our prospects were indeed settled in a way to satisfy our ambition. Besides my pay as Master of Appeals, paid out of the revenue of the Council of State, the King gave me a thousand francs a month out of the privy purse, and not unfrequently made me a present. Though the King knew full well that a young man of three-and-twenty could not long withstand the amount of work he piled upon me, my colleague, now a peer of France, was not appointed till the month of August 1817. A choice was so difficult, our functions demanded such various qualities, that the King was long in coming to a decision. He did me the honor to ask me which of the young men among whom he was prepared to choose would best suit me as a companion. One of the number was a former comrade of mine at the Lepître boarding-house, and I did not name him.

The King asked me why.

"Your Majesty," said I, "has mentioned men of equal loyalty, but of different degrees of ability. I have named the man I consider the most capable, feeling certain that we shall always agree."

My judgment coincided with the King's, who was always grateful for the sacrifice I had made. On this occasion he said to me, "You will be the first of the two." And he gave my colleague to understand this; still, in return for this service, my deputy became my friend.

The consideration with which I was treated by the Duc de Lenoncourt was the standard for that shown me by the rest of the world. The mere words—"The King is greatly interested in this young man; he has a future before him;

the King likes him"—would have sufficed in lieu of talents; but they also added to the kindness shown to a young official the indescribable tribute that is paid only to power.

Either at the Duc de Lenoncourt's, or at my sister's house—married at about this time to our cousin the Marquis de Listomère, the son of the old aunt I had been wont to visit in the Ile Saint-Louis—I gradually made the acquaintance of the most influential persons of the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

Henriette ere long threw me into the heart of the circle known as the "Petit-Château," by the good offices of the Princesse de Blamont-Chauvry, whose grand-niece she was by marriage. She wrote of me in such glowing terms, that the Princess at once invited me to call on her. I was assiduous, and was so happy as to please her; she became not my patroness, but a friend whose feelings were almost maternal. The old Princess set her heart on making me intimate with her daughter Mme. d'Espard, with the Duchesse de Langeais, the Vicomtesse de Beauséant, and the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse—women who, by turns, held the scepter of fashion, and who were all the more gracious to me because I made no claims upon them, and was always ready to be of service to them.

My brother Charles, far from ignoring me, thenceforth relied on my support; but my rapid success was the cause of some secret jealousy, which at a later period gave me much annoyance. My father and mother, amazed by such unexpected good fortune, felt their vanity flattered, and at last recognized me as their son; but as the sentiment was to some extent artificial, not to say acted, this revulsion had not much effect on my ulcerated heart. Besides, affection that is tainted with selfishness excites little sympathy; the heart abhors every form of calculation and profit.

I wrote regularly to my dear Henriette, who answered me in a letter or two each month. Thus her spirit hovered over me, her thoughts traversed space and kept a pure atmosphere about me. No woman could attract me. The King knew of my reserve; in such matters he was of the school of Louis XV., and used to laugh and call me "Mlle de Vande-

nesse," but the propriety of my conduct was very much approved by him. I am quite sure that the patience which had become a habit during my childhood, and yet more at Clochegourde, did much to win me the King's good graces; he was always most kind to me. He no doubt indulged a fancy for reading my letters, for he was not long under any mistake as to my blameless life. One day when the Duke was in attendance I was writing from the King's dictation, and he, seeing the Duke come in, looked mischievously at us both.

"Well, that confounded fellow Mortsauf still persists in living on?" said he, in his fine ringing voice, to which he could at will give a tone of biting sarcasm.

"Yes, still," replied the Duke.

"But the Comtesse de Mortsauf is an angel whom I should very much like to see here," the King went on. "However, I can do nothing; but perhaps my secretary," and he turned to me, "may be more fortunate. You have six months' leave. I shall engage as your colleague the young man of whom we were speaking yesterday. Enjoy yourself at Clochegourde, Master Cato!" and he smiled as he was wheeled out of the room in his chair.

I flew like a swallow to Touraine. For the first time I was about to show myself to the woman I loved, not only as rather less of a simpleton, but in the paraphernalia of a young man of fashion whose manners had been formed in the politest circles, whose education had been finished by the most charming women, who had at last won the reward of his sufferings, and who had made good use of the experience of the fairest angel to whom Heaven ever intrusted the care of a child.

When I had stayed at Clochegourde at the time of my mission in La Vendée, I had been in shooting dress; I wore a jacket with tarnished white metal buttons, finely striped trousers, leather gaiters, and shoes. My long tramp and the thickets had served me so ill that the Count was obliged to lend me some linen. This time, two years' residence in Paris, the duty of attending the King, the habits of wealth, my now complete development, and a youthful countenance which beamed with indescribable light, derived from the



serenity of a soul magnetically united to the pure soul at Clochegourde that went forth to me,—all had transfigured me; I was sure of myself without being conceited; I was deeply satisfied at finding myself, young as I was, at the top of the tree; I had the proud consciousness of being the secret mainstay of the most adorable woman on earth, and her unconfessed hope.

I felt perhaps some stirrings of vanity when the postilion's whip cracked in the newly-made avenue from the Chinon road to Clochegourde, and a gate I had never seen opened in an inclosing wall that had been recently built. I had not written to announce my arrival to the Countess, wishing to take her by surprise; but this was a twofold blunder: in the first place, she suffered the shock of a pleasure long wished for, but regarded as impossible, and she also proved to me that elaborate surprises are always in bad taste.

When Henriette beheld a young man where she had remembered a boy, her eyes fell with a tragical droop; she allowed me to take her hand and kiss it without showing any of the heartfelt pleasure which I had been wont to perceive in her sensitive thrill; and when she raised her face to look at me again, I saw that she was pale.

"So you do not forget old friends!" said M. de Mortsauf, who had neither altered nor grown older.

The two children sprang into my arms; I saw in the doorway the grave face of the Abbé de Dominis, Jacques's tutor.

"No," said I to the Count, "and henceforth I shall have six months of every year to devote always to you.—Why, what is the matter?" I said to the Countess, putting my arm round her waist to support her, in the presence of all her family.

"Oh! leave me!" she exclaimed with a start; "it is nothing."

I read her soul, and answered her secret thought, saying, "Do you no longer acknowledge me for your faithful slave?"

She took my arm, turned away from the Count, the children, the Abbé, and all the servants who had hurried out,

and led me round the lawn, still within sight of them all. When we had gone so far that she thought she could not be heard—

“Félix, my friend,” she said, “forgive the alarms of a woman who has but one clew by which to guide herself in an underground labyrinth, and fears to find it broken. Tell me once more that I am more than ever your Henriette, that you will not desert me, that nothing can dislodge me, that you will always be my faithful friend. I have had a sudden vision of the future—and you were not there as usual, with a radiant face and eyes fixed on mine; you had your back to me.”

“Henriette, dear idol, whom I worship more than I do God, Lily, flower of my life, how can you, who are my conscience, fail to know that I am so entirely part of your heart, that my soul is here when my body is in Paris? Need I tell you that I have traveled hither in seventeen hours; that every turn of the wheel bore with it a world of thought and longing, which broke out like a tempest the moment I saw you——”

“Tell me, tell me! I am sure of myself. I can listen to you without sinning. God does not desire my death; He sends you to me as He gives the breath of life to His creatures, as He sheds rain from the clouds on a barren land. Speak, tell me, do you love me with a holy love?”

“With a holy love.”

“And forever?”

“Forever.”

“As a Virgin Mary, to be left shrouded in her draperies under her spotless crown?”

“As a visible Virgin.”

“As a sister?”

“As a sister too dearly loved.”

“As a mother?”

“As a mother I secretly long for.”

“Chivalrously, without hope?”

“Chivalrously, but hoping.”

“In short, as if you were still but twenty, and had your shabby blue evening coat?”

"Oh, far better! I love you like that, but I also love you as——" She looked at me in keen alarm. "As you loved your aunt."

"Ah! I am happy; you have relieved my fears," said she, returning to the others, who stood puzzled by our private colloquy.

"Be still a child here!—for you are but a child. If your best policy is to be a man to the King, understand that here it is to be a boy. As a boy you will be loved. I shall always resist the powers of the man, but what can I deny a child? Nothing; he can ask nothing that I would not grant.—We have told all our secrets," she added, looking at the Count with a saucy smile, in which I saw her a girl again, in all her simple nature. "I am going in now to dress."

Never for three years had I known her voice so thoroughly happy. It was the first time I heard those swallow-like notes, that childlike tone of which I have spoken.

I had brought a sportsman's outfit for Jacques, and a workbox for Madeleine—which her mother always used; in short, I had made up for the shabbiness to which I had hitherto been condemned by my mother's parsimony. The delight of the two children as they displayed their presents to each other seemed to annoy the Count, who was always aggrieved if he were not the center of attentions. I gave Madeleine a look of intelligence, and followed the Count, who wanted to talk about himself. He led me to the terrace; but we paused on the steps at each solemn fact he impressed upon me.

"My poor, dear Félix," said he, "you find them all happy and in good health. It is I who give shadow to the picture. I have absorbed their maladies, and I can bless God for having inflicted them on me. I used not to know what ailed me; but I know now—I have a disease of the pylorus; I can digest nothing."

"By what good luck have you become as learned as a professor of the College of Physicians?" said I, smiling. "Is your doctor so indiscreet as to tell you this?"

"Heaven preserve me from consulting doctors!" he ex-

claimed, with the look of repugnance that most imaginary invalids show at the thought of medical treatment.

Then I had to listen to a crazy harangue, in the course of which he was ridiculously confidential, complaining of his wife, his servants, his children, and his life, taking evident delight in repeating his remarks of every day to a friend who, not knowing them, might be startled by them, and who was obliged by politeness to seem interested. He must have been satisfied, for I listened with deep attention, trying to formulate this inconceivable character, and to guess what new torments he was inflicting on his wife, though she had not said so.

Henriette herself put an end to the monologue by coming out on to the steps. The Count saw her, shook his head, and added—

“You, Félix, listen to me; but no one here has any pity for me.”

And he went away as though aware that he would be in the way during my conversation with Henriette, or perhaps as a chivalrous attention to her, knowing that he would give her pleasure by leaving us together. His character was full of really inexplicable contradictions, for he was jealous, as all weak persons are; but his confidence in his wife’s saintliness knew no bounds; perhaps it was the irritation to his vanity caused by the superiority of her lofty virtue that gave rise to his constant antagonism to the Countess’s wishes, whom he loved to defy as children defy their mother and their masters. Jacques was at his lessons, Madeleine was dressing; thus I had an hour to walk alone with the Countess on the terrace.

“Well, dear angel,” said I, “so the chain is heavier than ever, the sands more scorching, the thorns more thickly set?”

“Be silent,” said she, guessing what thoughts had been suggested to me by the Count’s conversation. “You are here, and all is forgotten! I am not, I have not been unhappy.”

She danced a few light steps as if to flutter her white dress, to let the breezes play with her frills of snowy tulle,

her loose sleeves, her bright ribbons, her cape, and the airy curls of her hair dressed à la *Sévigné*; I saw her for the first time really girlish and young, naturally gay, and as ready for sport as a child. I experienced both the tears of happiness and the delight a man feels in giving pleasure.

"Sweet flower of humanity," cried I, "that my fancy caresses and my spirit kisses! Oh my Lily! still intact and erect on its stem, still white, proud, fragrant, and alone!"

"That is enough, monsieur," she said, with a smile. "Talk to me about yourself, and tell me everything."

And then, under the moving canopy of quivering leaves, we had a long conversation, full of endless parentheses, each subject dropped and taken up again, in which I initiated her into my whole life and all my occupations. I described my rooms in Paris, for she wanted to know everything, and I—joy then not fully appreciated!—I had nothing to conceal. As she thus read all my soul, and learned all the details of my life full of overwhelming toil, as she discerned the importance of my functions, in which, but for the strictest honesty, it would be so easy to cheat and grow rich, and which I exercised with such fidelity that the King, as I told her, nicknamed me Mlle. de Vandenesse, she clasped my hand and kissed it, leaving on it a tear of joy. This sudden inversion of our parts, this splendid praise, the swiftly expressed feeling, even more swiftly understood—"You are indeed the master I could have obeyed, the fulfillment of my dream!"—all the avowal expressed in this action, whose very humility was dignity, betraying love in a sphere far above the senses; this whirl of heavenly emotions fell on my heart and crushed me. I felt so small! I wished I could die at her feet.

"Oh!" I exclaimed, "you women will always outdo us in every way. How could you doubt me?—for you did doubt me just now, Henriette."

"Not in the present," she replied, looking at me with the ineffable sweetness that softened the light in her eyes for me alone. "But seeing you so handsome, I said to myself: Our plans for Madeleine will be marred by some woman who will guess what treasures lie below, who will worship you,

and rob us of our Félix, and destroy everything for us."

"Still Madeleine!" said I, with an expression of surprise which only half distressed her. "Is it to Madeleine that I remain faithful?"

We then sat in silence, very provokingly interrupted by M. de Mortsauf. My heart was full, but I had to keep up a conversation beset with difficulties, in which my truthful replies as to the policy then carried out by the King offended the Count's views, while he insisted on my explaining His Majesty's intentions. Notwithstanding my questions as to his horses, the state of agriculture, whether he was satisfied with his five farms, if he meant to fell the trees in the old avenue, he constantly came back to politics with the petulance of an old maid and the pertinacity of a child; for minds of this type always eagerly turn to the side where light shines, they blunder up to it again and again, buzzing round but getting no nearer, exhausting one's spirit as blue-bottle flies weary the ear by humming against the window pane.

Henriette said nothing. I, to put an end to a dialogue which the warmth of youth might have heated to a flame, replied in assenting monosyllables, thus avoiding a useless discussion; but M. de Mortsauf was far too clearsighted not to discern the offensive side of my politeness. Presently he turned restive, vexed at being constantly agreed with; his eyebrows and the wrinkles in his forehead twitched, his tawny eyes flashed, his bloodshot nose turned redder than ever, as on that day when, for the first time, I witnessed one of his fits of frenzy. Henriette gave me a beseeching look to convey to me that she could not exert on my behalf the firmness she employed in justifying or defending the children.

I then answered the Count, taking him seriously, and managing him with the greatest skill.

"Poor dear! poor dear!" she said, murmuring the words again and again; they fell on my ear like a breath of air. Then, when she thought she could interfere with some success, she exclaimed, interrupting us—

"Do you know, gentlemen, that you are desperately unamusing!"

Recalled by this remark to the chivalrous deference due to a woman, the Count ceased discussing politics; it was now his turn to be bored as we talked of trifles, and he left us free to walk together, saying that perpetually pacing up and down on the same spot made him giddy.

My gloomy conjectures were accurate. The fair scenery, the mild atmosphere, the clear sky, the exquisite poetry of this valley, which for fifteen years had soothed the acutest vagaries of this sick brain, had now lost their power. At an age when in most men the rough edges wear down and the angles rub smooth, this old gentleman's temper was more aggressive than ever. For some months now he had been contradictory for contradiction's sake, without reason, without justifying his opinions; he asked the wherefore of everything, fussed over a delay or a message, interfered incessantly in domestic matters, and demanded an account of the smallest details of the household, till he wore out his wife and his servants, leaving them no freedom of action. Formerly he had not given way to temper without some plausible reason, now his fractiousness was incessant. The care of his money and the anxieties of husbandry, with the stir of a busy life, had perhaps diverted his atrabilious humor by giving his anxious spirit something to work on, and employing his active mind; perhaps it was want of occupation that now left his disorder to react upon itself; having nothing outside him to fret it, it took the form of fixed ideas; the physical individual had become the victim of the moral individual.

He was now his own doctor. He compared medical works, and believed he had all the complaints of which he read the descriptions; then he took the most elaborate precautions to guard his health, always something new, impossible to foresee, more impossible to satisfy. At one time he would have no noise; and when the Countess had succeeded in establishing total silence, he would suddenly complain of living in a tomb, and say that there was a medium between making no noise and the muteness of La Trappe. Sometimes he af-

fect absolute indifference to all earthly things; then the whole house breathed again; the children could play, the work of the household was carried on without any fault-finding; suddenly, in the midst of it all, he would cry out piteously, "You want to kill me!—My dear, if it concerned the children, you would know by instinct what annoyed them!" he would say to his wife, adding to the injustice of the words by the hard, cold tones in which he spoke them. Then he was forever dressing and undressing, studying the least variation of temperature, and never doing anything without consulting the barometer. In spite of his wife's motherly care, he never found any food to his liking, for he declared that his stomach was always out of order, and that painful digestion hindered his sleeping; at the same time, he ate, drank, digested, and slept in a way that the most learned physician might have admired. His endless caprices wore out the household; like all servants, they were the slaves of routine, and incapable of accommodating themselves to the exigencies of constantly varying orders. The Count would desire that all the windows were to be left open, as fresh air was indispensable to his health; a few days later the air was too damp, or too hot, he could not endure it; he scolded, he quarreled over it, and, to be in the right, would deny his previous order. This lack of memory, or of honesty, of course gave him the victory in every discussion when his wife tried to prove that he contradicted himself.

A residence at Clochegourde was so unendurable that the Abbé de Dominis, an exceedingly learned man, had fallen back on the solution of certain problems, and intrenched himself in affected absence of mind. The Countess no longer hoped to be able to keep the secret of his fits of mad fury within the family circle, as of old. The servants had already witnessed many scenes when the prematurely old man's unreasoning rage passed all bounds; they were so much attached to the Countess that nothing was ever repeated, but she lived in daily terror of some outburst in public of a frenzy which no respect of persons could now control. At a later time I heard terrible details of the Count's behavior to his wife; instead of being a help to her, he overwhelmed her



with gloomy predictions, making her responsible for future ills because she refused to follow the insane medical treatment he wished to inflict on the children. If the Countess went out walking with Jacques and Madeleine, her husband would prophesy of coming storms in spite of a clear sky; then if by chance his prediction was justified by the event, his conceit was so much gratified as to be indifferent to the harm done to his children. If one of them fell ill, the Count exercised his wit in finding a cause for the attack in the system of nursing adopted by his wife, which he would dispute in its minutest details, always ending with these brutal words, "If your children are ill again, it is all your own doing!"

He carried this system into the smallest points of domestic management, in which he always saw the worst side of things, and made himself "the devil's advocate," to quote his old coachman's expression. The Countess had arranged that Jacques and Madeleine should have their meals at a different hour from their parents, and had thus preserved them from the dreadful effects of the Count's malady, meeting every storm as it broke. The children rarely saw their father.

By an illusion peculiar to selfish people, the Count had no suspicion of the mischief he caused. In his confidential conversation with me he had indeed blamed himself for too great leniency to his family. Thus he wielded the knout, felling and destroying everything about him as a monkey might have done, and after wounding his victim denied that he had ever touched her. I understood now what had drawn the lines, as fine as razor-cuts, across the Countess's brow; I had noticed them as soon as I saw her. There is a sort of modesty in noble souls that keeps them from uttering their sorrows; they hide their griefs from those they love, out of pride and a feeling of luxurious charity. And in spite of my urgency, I did not at once extract this confession from Henriette. She feared to distress me; she let things out, bit by bit, with sudden blushes; but I was not slow to guess the aggravated bitterness that her husband's want of occupation had infused into the domestic miseries of Clochegourde.

"Henriette," said I a few days later, showing her that

I had sounded the depths of her new griefs, "did not you make a mistake when you planned your estate so completely as to leave the Count nothing to employ him?"

"Nay, dear," she said with a smile, "my position is so critical as to need all my attention; believe me, I have studied every alternative—they are all exhausted. It is true, worries increase every day. As M. de Mortsauf and I are always together, I cannot diminish them by distributing them to several points; everything must bring the same suffering on me. I had thoughts of amusing M. de Mortsauf by advising him to introduce the culture of silkworms at Cloche-gourde; there are some mulberry-trees here already, survivors from that industry, once known in Touraine; but I understood that he would be none the less tyrannical at home, that all the thousand troubles of the undertaking would fall upon me.

"You see, my observing friend," she went on, "while a man is young his bad qualities are controlled by the outer world, impeded in their rise by the other passions, checked by respect of persons; but later, in retirement, as a man grows old, little faults come forth, all the more terrible because they have so long been kept under. Human weakness is essentially cowardly; it grants neither peace nor truce; what has once been surrendered yesterday it insists on to-day, to-morrow, and forever after; it takes possession of all that is conceded and demands more. Strength is merciful; it yields to conviction; it is just and peaceable, while the passions that are born of weakness are pitiless. They are never satisfied but when they can behave like children, who like stolen fruit better than what they may eat at table. M. de Mortsauf takes a real pleasure in stealing a march on me; he who would never deceive anybody loves to deceive me so long as the trick remains unknown."

One morning, about a month after my arrival, as we came out from breakfast, the Countess took my arm, hurried out by a railed gate that opened into the orchard, and dragged me away to the vineyard.

"Oh! he will kill me!" cried she. "And yet I must live,

if only for the children's sake! Cannot I have a single day's respite? Must I always be stumbling over brambles, expecting every moment to fall, compelled every moment to summon all my strength to keep my balance? No living creature can endure such an expenditure of energy. If only I knew the ground I should be called upon to struggle over, if my endurance were a fixed quantity, my spirit would bend to it; but no, the attack comes every day in a new form and finds me defenseless; my trouble is not single, but manifold. Félix, Félix, you could never imagine the odious aspect his tyranny has assumed, or the odious measures suggested to him by his medical books. Ah! my friend——" she leaned her head on my shoulder without finishing her sentence. "What is to become of me; what can I do?" she went on, fighting with the ideas she had not uttered. "How can I contend with him? He will kill me.—No, I will kill myself—only that is a crime! Can I fly? There are the children! Demand a separation? But how, after fifteen years of married life, am I to tell my father that I cannot live with M. de Mortsauf when, if my father or my mother were to come here, he would be calm, well-conducted, polite, and witty. And besides, has a married woman a father and a mother? She belongs, body and soul, to her husband. I used to live in peace; if not happy, I found some strength in my chaste isolation. I confess it, if I am bereft of that negative comfort I too shall go mad! My objection is founded on reasons not personal to myself. Is it not wicked to bring poor little creatures into the world, who are doomed from birth to constant suffering? At the same time, this question of conduct is so serious that I cannot solve it unaided: I am judge and party to the suit. I will go to Tours to-morrow, and consult the Abbé Birotteau, my new director—for my dear and worthy Abbé de la Berge is dead," she said in a parenthesis. "Though he was stern, I shall always miss his apostolic firmness; his successor is an angel of mildness who is too easily touched to reprimand me. However, what courage can fail to find refreshment in religion? What reason but will gain strength from the voice of the Holy Ghost?

"Dear God!" she exclaimed, drying her tears and looking

up to heaven, "for what am I thus punished? But we must believe—yes, Félix," she said, laying her hand on my arm, "let us believe that we must pass through a red-hot crucible before we can mount holy and perfect to the higher spheres.—Ought I to be silent? Does God forbid my crying out to a friend's heart. Do I love him too well?" She clasped me to her as though she feared to lose me. "Who will answer my doubts? My conscience does not reproach me. The stars above shine down on men; why should not the soul, that living star, shed its fires over and round a friend when only pure thoughts go out to him?"

I listened in silence to this terrible outcry, holding her clammy hand in my own, which was moister still; I grasped it with a force to which Henriette responded with equal pressure.

"You are there, are you?" cried the Count, coming towards us bareheaded.

Since my return he had insisted on always being the third whenever we met, either because he counted on some amusement, or because he suspected the Countess of telling me of all her sorrows and bewailing herself to me; or again, because he was jealous of a pleasure he did not share.

"How he follows me about!" said she in a tone of despair. "We will go to look at the Clos, and then we shall avoid him. Stoop low behind the hedges and we shall escape." We screened ourselves behind a thick hedge, and reaching the vineyard at a run, found ourselves far enough from the Count under an alley of almond-trees.

"Dear Henriette," said I, holding her arm pressed against my heart, and standing still to contemplate her in her sorrow, "you could once steer me wisely through the perilous ways of the great world. Allow me now to give you some instructions to help you to end the single-handed duel in which you must infallibly be defeated, for you and he are not fighting with equal weapons. Struggle no longer against a mad-man——"

"Hush!" she exclaimed, keeping back the tears that filled her eyes.

"Listen to me, my dearest. After an hour of his talk,

which I endure for your sake, my mind is often bewildered and my head aches; the Count makes me doubt my very senses; the same things repeated are stamped in my brain in spite of myself. A strongly marked monomania is not infectious; when madness takes the form of affecting a man's views and hides itself behind perpetual discussions, it may act terribly on those who live with it. Your patience is sublime, but is it not stultifying? For your own sake, for your children's, change your system with the Count. Your exquisite submissiveness has increased his egoism; you treat him as a mother treats the child she spoils. But now, if you wish to live—and you do," I added, looking her in the face, "exert all the influence you have over him. He loves and he fears you—you know it; make him fear you more; meet his diffused willfulness with a narrow, set will. Increase your power, just as he has managed to increase the concessions you have granted; imprison his infirmities in a narrow moral sphere, as a maniac is imprisoned in a cell."

"Dear boy," said she, smiling bitterly, "none but a heartless woman could play such a part. I am a mother; I should make a feeble executioner. I can suffer—yes; but to make others suffer!—Never," she said, "not even to attain some great or conspicuous advantage. Should I not have to falsify my feelings, disguise my voice, set my face, restrain every gesture. . . . Do not require such lies of me. I can stand between M. de Mortsauf and his children; I can take his blows so that they may fall on no one else; that is the utmost I can do to reconcile so many antagonistic interests."

"Let me worship you! Saint, thrice saintly!" I exclaimed, kneeling on one knee, kissing her dress, and wiping on it the tears that rose to my eyes.—"But if he should kill you!" said I.

She turned pale, and raising her eyes to heaven—

"God's will be done," she replied.

"Do you know what the King said to your father when speaking of you: 'That old wretch of a Mortsauf still lives on'?"

"What is a jest on the King's lips is a crime here," she said.

In spite of our precautions, the Count had tracked us; bathed in sweat, he came up with us under a walnut-tree, where the Countess had paused to speak these grave words. As soon as I saw him, I began to discuss the vintage. Had he any unjust suspicions? I know not, but he stood looking at us without saying a word, or heeding the damp chill that falls from a walnut-tree.

After a few minutes, during which he spoke in broken sentences of no significance, with pauses of very great significance, the Count said he had a sick headache; he complained of it mildly, not claiming our pity nor describing his indisposition in exaggerated terms. We paid no heed to him. When we went in he felt still worse, talked of going to bed, and did so without ceremony, with a simplicity that was very unusual. We took advantage of the armistice granted to us by his fit of hypochondria, and went down to our beloved terrace, taking Madeleine with us.

"Let us go out on the river," said the Countess after a few turns; "we will go to see the fish caught by the game-keeper for to-day's supply."

We went out of the little gate, found the punt, got into it, and slowly pushed up stream. Like three children, delighted with trifles, we looked at the flowers on the banks, at the blue and green dragon-flies, and the Countess wondered that she could enjoy such tranquil pleasures in the midst of so much acute grief. But does not the calm influence of Nature moving on, indifferent to our struggles, exert a consoling charm? The whirl of passion, with its suppressed longings, harmonizes with that of the river; the flowers, unforced by the hand of man, express his most secret dreams; the delicious see-saw of a boat vaguely repeats the thoughts that float in the brain.

We felt the lulling influence of this twofold poetry. Our words, strung to the diapason of Nature, were full of mysterious grace, and our eyes shone with brighter beams, as they caught the light so lavishly shed by the sun on the scorching shore. The river was like a road on which we flew. In short, disengaged from the mechanical movement exerted in walking, the mind took possession of creation,

And was not the excited glee of the little girl in her freedom—so pretty in her movements, so puzzling in her remarks—the living expression of two souls set free, and indulging in the ideal creation of the being dreamed of by Plato, and known to all whose youth has been filled with happy love.

To give you an idea of that hour, not in its indescribable details, but as a whole, I may say that we loved each other in every creature, in every object that we saw about us; we felt outside us the happiness each longed for; it sank so deeply into our hearts, that the Countess drew off her gloves and let her beautiful hands play in the water, as if to cool some secret fires. Her eyes spoke; but her lips, parted like a rose to the air, would have closed on a desire. You know the harmony of deep notes in perfect concord with a high treble; it always reminds me of the harmony of our two souls that day, never more to be repeated.

“Where do your men fish,” said I, “if you can only fish from your own banks?”

“Near the bridge at Ruan,” said she. “The river is ours now from the bridge at Ruan down to Clochegourde. M. de Mortsauf has just bought forty acres of meadow with the savings of the last two years and the arrears of his pension. Does that surprise you?”

“I?—I only wish the whole valley were yours!” I exclaimed, and she answered with a smile.

We were presently above Pont de Ruan, at a spot where the Indre widens, and where the men were fishing.

“Well, Martineau?” said she.

“Oh, Mme. la Comtesse, luck is against us. We have been out three hours, working up from the mill, and we have caught nothing.”

We landed to help draw the net once more, standing, all three of us, in the shade of a poplar, with silvery bark, of a kind common on the Danube and the Loire, which in spring-time sheds a silky white fluff, the wrapper of its catkins. The Countess had resumed her serene dignity; she repented of having confessed her pangs to me, and of crying out like Job instead of weeping like a Magdalen—a Magdalen be-

reft of lovers, of feasts and dissipations, but not without perfume and beauty.

The net was drawn at her feet, full of fish—tench, barbel, pike, perch, and an enormous carp leaped upon the grass.

“They were sent on purpose!” said the keeper.

The laborers stared open-eyed with admiration of the woman standing like a fairy who had touched the net with her wand.

At this moment a groom appeared, riding at a gallop across the fields, and filling her with qualms of horror. Jacques was not with us; and a mother’s first instinct, as Virgil has so poetically expressed it, is to clasp her children to her bosom on the slightest alarm.

“Jacques!” she cried. “Where is Jacques? What has happened to my boy?”

She did not love me; if she had loved me, for my sufferings too, she would not have uttered this cry as of a lioness in despair.

“Mme. la Comtesse, M. le Comte is much worse.”

She drew a breath of relief, and ran off with me, followed by Madeleine.

“Come after me slowly,” said she, “that the dear child may not overheat herself. You see, M. de Mortsauf’s walk in this heat had put him into a perspiration, and standing in the shade of the walnut-trees may bring misfortune on us.”

The words revealed her purity of mind. The Count’s death a misfortune!

She hurried on to Clochegourde, went in by a break in the wall, and crossed the vineyard. I returned as slowly as she could wish. Henriette’s words had enlightened me, but as the lightning-flash which destroys the garnered harvest. During that hour on the river I had fancied that she cared most for me; I now felt bitterly that her words were perfectly sincere. The lover who is not all in all is nothing. So I was alone in my love with the longing of a passion that knows all its wants, that feeds on anticipation, on hoped-for kindness, and is satisfied with the joys of imagination, because it confounds with them those it looks for in the



future. If Henriette loved me, she still knew nothing of the joys or the storms of love. She lived on the feeling itself, as a saint is the spouse of God.

I was the object with which her thoughts were bound up, the sensations she misunderstood, as a swarm of bees clings to some blossoming bough; but I was not the element of life to her, only an adventitious fact. A king unthroned, I walked on, wondering who should restore me to my kingdom. In my crazy jealousy I blamed myself for never having greatly dared, for not having tightened the bonds of an affection—which now seemed to me refined out of all reality—by the chains of self-evident right conferred by possession.

The Count's indisposition, caused probably by a chill under the walnut-tree, in a few hours had become serious. I went off to Tours to fetch a physician of note, M. Origet, whom I could not bring back till the evening; but he spent the night and the next day at Clochegourde. Though he had sent the groom to fetch a large number of leeches, he thought immediate bleeding necessary, and had no lancet with him. I rushed off to Azay, in dreadful weather; I roused M. Deslandes, the surgeon, and made him come off with the rapidity of a bird. Ten minutes later the Count would have succumbed; bleeding saved him.

In spite of this first triumph, the doctor pronounced him in a dangerously high fever, one of those attacks which come on people who have ailed nothing for twenty years. The Countess was overwhelmed; she believed herself to be the cause of this disastrous illness. Unable to thank me for what I did, she was content to give me an occasional smile, with an expression that was equivalent to the kiss she had pressed on my hand; I wished I could read in it the remorse of an illicit passion; but it was an act of contrition, painful to see in so pure a soul, and the expression of admiring affection for him whom she considered noble, while she accused herself alone of an imaginary crime. She loved indeed as Laura de Noves loved Petrarca, and not as Francesca da Rimini loved Paolo—a crushing discovery for a man who had dreamed of the union of these two types of love. The Countess was reclining, her frame exhausted, her arms lying limp, in a

dirty armchair in that room that reminded me of a wild boar's den.

Next evening, before leaving, the doctor told the Countess, who had watched all night, that she must send for a nurse; the illness would be long.

"A nurse!" cried she. "No, no. We will nurse him," she added, looking at me. "We owe it to ourselves to save him."

At these words, the doctor glanced at us with an observing eye full of astonishment. The expression of her words was enough to lead him to suspect some crime that had failed in the execution. He promised to come twice a week, suggested the treatment to be pursued by M. Deslandes, and described the alarming symptoms which might necessitate his being fetched from Tours.

To secure the Countess at least one night's rest out of two, I proposed that she should allow me to sit up with the Count in turns with her; and thus, not without difficulty, I persuaded her to go to bed the third night. When all was still in the house, during a minute when the Count was dozing, I heard a sigh of anguish from Henriette's room. My anxiety was so keen that I went to see her; she was on her knees before her *prie-Dieu* in tears and accusing herself:—"Ah, God! if this is the price of a murmur," she cried, "I will never complain again."

"You have left him!" she exclaimed as she saw me.

"I heard you wailing and moaning, and I was alarmed about you."

"About me? Oh, I am quite well," she said.

She wanted to be sure that M. de Mortsaufr was really asleep. We went down together, and by the light of a lamp we looked at him. He was weakened by loss of blood rather than sleeping; his restless hands were trying to pull the counterpane up.

"They say that is a trick of the dying," said she. "Oh, if he were to die of this illness brought on by us, I would never marry again; I swear it!" she went on, solemnly holding out her hand over the Count's head.

"I have done all I can to save him," said I.

"You! Oh, you are most good!" said she. "It is I—I am the guilty one."

She bent down over the puckered brow, wiped away the moisture with her hair, and gave it a sacred kiss. But I noted, not without secret satisfaction, that she bestowed this caress as an expiation.

"Blanche—some drink," said the Count in a feeble voice.

"You see, he only recognizes me," she said as she brought him a glass. And by her tone and her affectionate attentions to him, she tried to heap insult on the feelings that bound us, immolating them to the sick man.

"Henriette," said I, "go and take some rest, I entreat you."

"Henriette no more!" she said, interrupting me with imperious haste.

"Go to bed, or you will be ill. Your children, he himself would desire you to spare yourself. There are times when selfishness is a sublime virtue."

"Yes," said she.

And she went, urging me to watch her husband, by gestures that might have seemed to indicate approaching delirium if the grace of childhood had not mingled with the passionate entreaty of repentance.

This scene, frightful as compared with the usual state of this placid soul, alarmed me; I feared the extravagance of her conscience. When the doctor next came, I explained to him the scruples, as of a scared ermine, that were tormenting my spotless Henriette. This confidence, though very guarded, dispelled M. Origet's suspicions, and he soothed the terrors of that sweet soul by assuring her that, from whatever cause, the Count must have had this violent attack, and that the chill he had taken under the walnut-tree had been beneficial rather than injurious by bringing it on.

For fifty-two days the Count hovered between life and death. Henriette and I sat up with him in turn, each for twenty-six nights. M. de Mortsauif undoubtedly owed his recovery to our care, and the scrupulous exactitude with which we carried out M. Origet's instructions. Like all

philosophical doctors, whose shrewd observation justifies them in doubting a noble action, even when it is merely the secret fulfillment of a duty, this man, while noticing the rivalry of heroism between me and the Countess, could not help watching us with inquisitive eyes, so fearful was he of being cheated of his admiration.

"In such a case as this," said he on the occasion of his third visit, "death finds a ready auxiliary in the mind when it is so seriously affected as that of the Count. The doctor, the nurse, those who are about the patient hold his life in their hands; for a single word, a mere gesture of apprehension, may be as fatal as poison."

As he spoke thus Origet studied my face and my expression; but he read in my eyes the sincerity of an honest soul. For indeed, throughout this cruel illness, my mind was never once invaded by the very slightest of those involuntary evil ideas which sometimes sear the most innocent conscience.

For those who contemplate nature as a whole, everything tends to union by assimilation. The spiritual world must be governed by an analogous principle. In a pure realm all is pure. In Henriette's presence there was a fragrance as of heaven itself; it seems as though any not irreproachable thought must alienate me from her forever. Hence she was not only my happiness, she was also my virtue. Finding us always unfailingly attentive and careful, the doctor put an indescribable tone of pious pathos into his words and manner, as if he were thinking—"These are the real sufferers; they hide their wounds and forget them."

By an effect of contrast which, as this worthy man assured us, is common enough in such wrecks of manhood, M. de Mortsauf was patient and tractable, never complained, and showed the most wonderful docility—he who in health could not do the least thing without a thousand comments. The secret of this submission to medical treatment, formerly so scouted, was a covert dread of death, another contrast in a man of unblemished courage. And this fear may perhaps account for various singular features in the altered temper he owed to his misfortunes.

Shall I confess to you, Natalie, and will you believe me? Those fifty days, and the month that came after, were the golden days of my life. In the infinite expanse of the soul is not love what, in a broad valley, the river is to which flow all the rains, the brooks and torrents, into which are borne the trees and flowers, the gravel of its banks, and the fragments of the higher rocks? it is fed alike by storms and by the slow tribute of rippling springs. Yes, when we love, everything feeds love.

The first great danger past, the Countess and I became accustomed to sickness. In spite of the confusion caused by the constant care needed by the Count, his room, which we had found in such disorder, was made neat and pretty. Ere-long we lived there like two beings dropped on a desert island; for not only do troubles isolate us, but they silence the petty conventionality of the world. And then for the sick man's benefit we were forced into contact such as no other event could have brought about. How often did our hands meet, heretofore so shy, in doing her husband some service. Was it not my part to support and help Henriette? Carried away by a duty that may be compared with that of a soldier at an outpost, she would often forget to eat; then I would bring her food, sometimes on her knee—a hasty meal necessitating a hundred little services. It was a childish scene on the brink of a yawning grave. She would hastily order me to prepare what might save the Count some discomfort, and employ me on a variety of trivial tasks.

In the early days, when the imminence of danger stifled the subtle distinctions of ordinary life, as in the field of battle, she inevitably neglected the reserve which every woman, even the most simple-minded, maintains in her speech, looks, and behavior when she is surrounded by the world or by her family, but which is incompatible with the undress of intimacy. Would she not come to call me at the chirp of awakening birds in a morning wrapper that sometimes allowed me a glimpse of the dazzling charms, which, in my wild hopes, I regarded as my own? Though always dignified and lofty, could she not also be familiar? And, indeed, during the first few days, that danger so completely elim-

inated every passionate meaning from the privacy of our intimate intercourse, that she thought of no harm; and afterwards, when reflection came, she felt perhaps that any change of demeanor would imply an insult as much to herself as to me. We found ourselves insensibly familiarized, half wed, as it were. She showed herself nobly confiding, as sure of me as of herself. Thus I grew more deeply into her heart.

The Countess was my Henriette once more, Henriette constrained to love me yet more, as I strove to be her second self. Erelong, I never had to wait for her hand, which she would give me irresistibly at the least beseeching glance; and I could study with delight the outlines of her fine figure without her shrinking from my gaze, during the long hours while we sat listening to the patient's slumbers. The slender joys we allowed ourselves, the appealing looks, the words spoken in a whisper not to awake the Count, the hopes and fears repeated again and again, in short, the myriad details of this fusion of two hearts so long sundered, stood out distinctly against the sad gloom of the real scene before us. We read each other's souls through and through in the course of this long test, to which the strongest affections sometimes succumb, unable to withstand the familiarity of every hour, and dropping away after testing the unyielding cohesion which makes life so heavy or so light a burden.

You know what mischief comes of a master's long illness, what disorder in his business; there is never time for anything; the stoppage put to his life hampers the movement of the house and family. Though everything always fell on Mme. de Mortsauf, the Count was of use on the estate; he went to talk to the farmers, he called on the business agents, he drew the rents; if she was the soul, still he was the body. I now appointed myself steward that she might nurse the Count without fear of ruin out of doors. She accepted everything without apologies, without thanks. This partition of household cares was another happy community of interests, and the orders I gave in her name. In her room in the evening we often discussed the children's prospects. These conversations lent a still further semblance of reality to our

make-believe married life. How gladly would Henriette lend herself to my playing the master's part, putting me in his place at table, sending me to speak to the gamekeeper; and all with simple innocence, but not without the secret pleasure which the most virtuous woman on earth must feel at finding a middle course combining strict observation of every law with the satisfaction of her unconfessed wishes. The Count, nullified by illness, was no longer a weight on his wife or on the house; and now the Countess was herself, she had a right to attend to me and make me the object of endless cares. What joy I felt on discovering in her a purpose of which she, perhaps, was but vaguely conscious, though it was exquisitely expressed—of revealing to me all the worth of her person and her character, of making me feel the change that came over her when she felt herself understood! This blossom, constantly curled up in the old atmosphere of her home, unfolded before my eyes and for me alone; she had as much delight in opening as I had in looking on with the inquisitive eye of love.

On the mornings when I slept late, after sitting up all night, Henriette was up before anyone. She preserved the most perfect silence; Jacques and Madeleine, without needing to be told, went away to play. She would devise endless wiles to lay my table herself, and she would serve my breakfast with such a sparkle of glee in every movement, with such a wild swallow-like precision, with such a color in her cheeks, such quaverings in her voice, such a lynx-like keenness of eye! Can such expansion of the soul be described? She was often overpowered by fatigue; but if by chance at one of these moments I needed anything, she found fresh strength for me, as for her children; she started up active, busy, and glad. She loved to shed her tenderness like sunbeams through the air. Yes, Natalie, some women here below enjoy the privileges of angelic spirits, and, like them, diffuse the light which Saint-Martin, the unknown philosopher, tells us is intelligent, melodious, and fragrant.

Henriette, secure in my reticence, rejoiced in lifting the heavy curtain which hid the future from us by showing herself to me as two women: the woman in bonds who had

fascinated me in spite of her asperities; the woman freed, whose sweetness was to seal my love to eternity. What a difference! Mme. de Mortsau was a love-bird transported into cold Europe, sadly drooping on its perch, mute and dying in the cage where it is kept by some naturalist; Henriette was the bird singing its Oriental raptures in a grove on the banks of the Ganges, and flying like a living gem from bough to bough amid the rosy flowers of a never-blooming Volkameria.

Her beauty was renewed, her spirit revived. These constant fireworks of gladness were a secret between our two souls; for to the Countess the eye of the Abbé de Dominis, who represented the world, was more alarming than her husband's. She, like me, took pleasure in giving her words ingenious turns; she hid her glee under a jest, and veiled the evidences of her affection under the specious flag of gratitude.

"We have put your friendship to the severest tests, Félix," she would say at dinner. "We may surely grant him such liberties as we allow to Jacques, M. l'Abbé?"

The austere Abbé replied with the kindly smile of a pious man who reads hearts and finds them pure; indeed, he always treated the Countess with the respect mingled with adoration that we feel for angels.

Twice in those fifty days the Countess went perhaps across the border line that limited our affection; but those two occasions were shrouded in a veil that was not lifted till our day of supreme avowals. One morning, in the early days of the Count's illness, just when she was repenting of having treated me so severely by denying me the harmless privileges of a chastened affection, I sat waiting for her to take my place. I was overtired, and fell asleep, my head resting against the wall. I awoke with a start, feeling my forehead touched by something mysteriously cool, that gave me a sensation as if a rose had lain on it. I saw the Countess some steps away from me, saying—

"Here I am!"

I went away, but as I wished her good-morning, I took her hand, and felt that it was moist and trembling.

"Are you ailing?" said I.



"Why do you ask?" she answered. I looked at her, coloring with confusion.

"I had been dreaming," said I.

One evening, during the last visits paid by Origet, who had pronounced the Count certainly convalescent, I was in the garden with Jacques and Madeleine; we were all three lying on the steps absorbed in a game of spillikins that we had contrived with splinters of straw and hooks made of pins. M. de Mortsau was asleep. The doctor, while waiting for his horse to be put to, was talking in a low voice to the Countess in the drawing-room. M. Origet presently left without my noticing his departure. After seeing him off, Henriette leaned against the window, whence she looked down on us for a long time though we did not know it. It was one of those hot evenings when the sky turns to copper color, when the country sends out a thousand confused voices to the echoes. A last gleam of sunshine lingered on the roofs, the flowers of the garden scented the air, the bells of the cattle being brought home to the byres, came from afar. And we, in sympathy with the stillness of this calm hour, stifled our laughter for fear of waking the Count.

Suddenly, above the flutter of a gown, I heard the guttural gasp of a strongly suppressed sob; I rushed into the drawing-room, I found the Countess sitting in the window recess, her handkerchief to her face; she knew my step, and, by an imperious gesture, desired me to leave her alone. I went up to her, heartsick with alarm, and wanted to force away her handkerchief; her face was drowned in tears. She fled to her own room, and did not come out till it was time for prayers. For the first time in those fifty days I led her to the terrace, and asked her the cause of her agitation; but she affected the most flippant cheerfulness, justifying it by Origet's good news.

"Henriette, Henriette," said I, "you knew that when I found you crying. Between us a lie is preposterous. Why would you not allow me to wipe away your tears? Can they have been for me?"

"I was thinking," she answered, "that to me this illness has been a respite from misery. Now that there is nothing

more to fear for M. de Mortsauf, I must fear for myself."

She was right. The Count's returning health was marked by his grotesque moods; he began to declare that neither his wife, nor I, nor the doctor knew how to treat him; we were all ignorant of his complaint and of his constitution, of his sufferings, and of the suitable remedies. Origet, infatuated by heaven knows what quackery, thought it was a degeneracy of the secretions, while he ought only to have studied the disorder of the pylorus!

One day, looking at us mischievously, like a man who has spied out or guessed something, he said to his wife, with a smile—

"Well, my dear, and if I had died—you would have regretted me, no doubt, but, confess, you would have been resigned."

"I should have worn Court mourning, red and black," she said, laughing to silence him.

It was especially with regard to his food, which the doctor had carefully limited, forbidding that the patient's craving should be satisfied, that we had the most violent scenes and outcries, with which nothing could be compared in the past, for the Count's temper was all the more atrocious for having been to sleep, so to speak. Fortified by the physician's orders, and the faithfulness of the servants, and confirmed by me, for I saw in this contest a way of teaching her to govern her husband, the Countess was resolute in her resistance; she listened with a calm countenance to his frenzy and scolding; by thinking of him as a child—as he was—she accustomed herself to hear his abusive words. Thus at last I was so happy as to see her assert her authority over this disordered mind. The Count called out, but he obeyed; and he obeyed all the more after the greatest outcry.

In spite of the evidence of the results, Henriette would often shed tears at the sight of this feeble and haggard old man, his forehead yellower than a falling leaf, his eyes dim, his hands tremulous; she would blame herself for her sternness, and could seldom resist the delight she saw in the Count's eyes when, as she doled out his meals, she exceeded

the doctor's restrictions. She was all the sweeter and milder to him for having been so to me; still, there were shades of difference which filled my heart with boundless joy. She was not indefatigable; she knew when to call the servants to wait on the Count if his whims were too many in rapid succession, and he began to complain of her misunderstanding him.

The Countess purposed an act of thanksgiving to God for M. de Mortsauf's recovery; she commanded a special Mass, and bade me offer her my arm to escort her to church. I did her bidding; but during the service I went to call on M. and Mme. de Chessel. On my return she tried to scold me.

"Henriette," said I, "I am incapable of deceit. I can throw myself into the water to rescue my enemy when he is drowning, I can lend him my cloak to warm him—in short, I can forgive, but I cannot forget."

She said nothing, but pressed my arm to her heart.

"You are an angel; you were, no doubt, sincere in your thanksgiving," I went on. "The mother of the Prince of the Peace was snatched from the hands of a mob who wanted to kill her, and when the Queen asked her, 'What did you do?'—'I prayed for them,' said she. Women are all like that: I am a man, and necessarily imperfect."

"Do not slander yourself," said she, shaking my arm sharply. "Perhaps you are better than I am."

"Yes," replied I, "for I would give eternity for a single day of happiness, while to you!—"

"Me!" she cried, with a haughty glance.

I was silent, and my eyes fell under the lightning of her eyes.

"Me!" she went on. "Of what *me* are you speaking? There are in me many *me's*. Those children," and she pointed to Jacques and Madeleine, "are part of me.—Félix," she said in a heartrending tone, "do you think me selfish? Do you think that I could sacrifice eternity to recompense him who is sacrificing this life for me? The thought is a shocking one; it is contrary to every sentiment of religion. Can a woman who falls so low rise again? Can her happiness absolve her?—You will drive me soon to decide the question! Yes, I am betraying at last a secret of my con-

science; the idea has often crossed my mind, I have expiated it by bitter penance; it was the cause of the tears you wanted me to account for the other day—

“Are you not attributing too great importance to certain things on which ordinary women set a high value, and which you ought to——”

“Oh,” cried she, interrupting me, “do you value them less?”

Such an argument put an end to all reasoning.

“Well,” she went on, “I will tell you!—Yes, I could be so mean as to desert the poor old man whose life is in my hands. But, dear friend, those two poor, feeble little creatures you see before us, Jacques and Madeleine—would not they be left with their father? And do you think, I ask you, do you believe that they could survive three months under that man’s insensate tyranny? If by failing in my duty, I alone”—she smiled loftily. “But should I not be killing my two children? Their doom would be certain.—Great God!” she exclaimed, “how can we talk of such things? Go and marry, and leave me to die.”

She spoke in a tone of such concentrated bitterness, that she stifled the outburst of my passion.

“You cried out up there, under the walnut-tree. I have just cried out here, under these alders. That is all. Henceforth I am silent.”

“Your generosity overwhelms me,” said she, looking up to heaven.

We had by this time reached the terrace, and found the Count seated there in a chair, in the sunshine. The sight of that sunken face, hardly animated by a faint smile, extinguished the flames that had flared up from the ashes. I leaned against the parapet, contemplating the picture before me: the infirm man with his two still delicate children; his wife, pale with watching, and grown thin from excess of work, from the alarms, and perhaps from the joys, of these two dreadful months, though at this moment she was deeply flushed from the emotions of the scene she had gone through. At the sight of this suffering family, shrouded under the tremulous foliage through which fell the gray light of a dull

autumn day, I felt the ties relax which hold body and soul together. I experienced for the first time that moral revulsion which, it is said, the stoutest fighters feel in the fury of the fray, a sort of chilling madness that makes a coward of the bravest, a bigot of a disbeliever, which induces total indifference to everything, even to the most vital sentiments—to honor, to love; for doubt robs us of all knowledge of ourselves, and disgusts us with life. Poor nervous creatures, who, by your high-strung organization, are delivered over defenseless to I know not what fatality, who shall be your peers and judges? I understood how the bold youth who had erewhile put out a hand to grasp the Marshal's baton, who had been no less skilled in diplomacy than intrepid as a captain, had become the unconscious murderer I saw before me! Could my own desires, at this moment wreathed with roses, bring me too to such an end? Appalled alike by the cause and the effect, asking, like the impious, where in all this was Providence, I could not restrain two tears that fell down my cheeks.

"What is the matter, dear, good Félix?" asked Madeleine in her childish voice.

Then Henriette dispelled those black vapors and gloom by an anxious look, which shone on my soul like the sun.

At this moment the old groom from Tours brought me a letter, at the sight of which I could not help uttering a cry of surprise, and Mme. de Mortsauf trembled at my dismay. I saw the seal of the Cabinet. The King ordered me back. I held the letter out to her; she read it in a flash.

"He is going away!" said the Count.

"What will become of me?" she said to me, for the first time contemplating her desert without sunshine.

We paused in a stupefied frame of mind, which oppressed us all equally, for we had never before so acutely felt that we were all indispensable to each other. The Countess, as she talked even of the most indifferent matters, spoke in an altered voice, as though the instrument had lost several strings, and those that remained were loosened. Her movements were apathetic, her looks had lost their light. I begged her to confide her thoughts to me.

"Have I any thoughts?" said she.

She led me away to her room, made me sit down on the sofa, hunted in the drawer of her dressing-table, and then, kneeling down in front of me, she said—

"Here is all the hair I have lost these twelve months past; take it—it is yours by right; you will some day know how and why."

I gently bent over her, she did not shrink to avoid my lips, and I pressed them to her brow solemnly, with no guilty excitement, no inviting passion. Did she mean to sacrifice everything? Or had she, like me, only come to look over the precipice?—If love had prompted her to abandon herself, she could not have been so profoundly calm, have given me that religious look, or have said in her clear voice—

"You have quite forgiven me?"

I set out in the evening, she accompanied me on the road to Frapesle, and we stood under the walnut-tree; I pointed it out to her, telling her how I had first seen it, four years ago.

"The valley was so lovely!" I exclaimed.

"And now?" she said eagerly.

"Now you are under the tree," said I; "and the valley is our own."

She bent her head, and there we parted. She got into the carriage again with Madeleine, and I into mine, alone.

On my return to Paris, I was fortunately taken up by a press of work which forcibly diverted my mind, and obliged me to live apart from the world, which forgot me. I corresponded with Mme. de Mortsauf, to whom I sent my journal every week, and who replied twice a month. It was an obscure and busy life, resembling the overgrown, flowery nooks, quite unknown, which I had admired in the depths of the woods when composing fresh poems of flowers during the last fortnight.

All ye who love, bind yourselves by these delightful duties; impose a rule on yourselves, to be carried out, as the Church does on Christians, for every day.

The rigorous observances created by the Roman Catholic religion are a grand idea; they trace deeper and deeper

grooves of duty in the soul by the repetition of acts which encourage hope and fear. The feelings always flow, a living stream, in these channels which keep the current within bounds and purify it, perpetually refreshing the heart, and fertilizing life by the abounding treasures of hidden faith, a divine spring multiplying the single thought of a single love.

My passion, a relic of the Middle Ages, recalling the days of chivalry, became known, I know not how; perhaps the King and the Duc de Lenoncourt spoke of it. From this uppermost sphere, the story, at once romantic and simple, of a young man piously devoted to a beautiful woman who had no public, who was so noble in her solitude, and faithful without the support of duty, no doubt became known in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. I found myself the object of inconvenient attention in drawing-rooms, for an inconspicuous life has advantages which, once tasted, make the parade of a life in public unendurable. Just as eyes that are accustomed to see none but subdued colors are hurt by broad daylight, so there are minds averse to violent contrasts. I was then one of these; you may be surprised now to hear it; but have patience, the eccentricities of the Vandenesse you know will be accounted for.

I found women amiably disposed towards me, and the world kind.

After the Duc de Berry's marriage the Court became splendid once more, the French *fêtes* were revived. The foreign occupation was a thing of the past, prosperity returned, amusements were possible. Personages of illustrious rank or considerable wealth poured in from every part of Europe to the capital of intelligence, where all the advantages and the vices of other countries were magnified and intensified by French ingenuity.

Five months after leaving Clochegourde, my good angel wrote me a letter in despair, telling me that her boy had had a serious illness, from which he had recovered indeed, but which had left her in dread for the future; the doctor had spoken of care being needed for his lungs—a terrible verdict that casts a black shadow on every hour of a mother's

life. Hardly had Henriette drawn a breath of relief as Jacques was convalescent, before his sister made her anxious. Madeleine, the pretty flower that had done such credit to her mother's care, went through an illness which, though not serious, was a cause of anxiety in so fragile a constitution.

Crushed already by the fatigues of Jacques's long sickness, the Countess had no courage to meet this fresh blow, and the sight of these two beloved beings made her insensible to the increasing torment of her husband's temper. Storms, each blacker than the last, and bringing with it more stones, uprooted by their cruel surges the hopes that were most deeply rooted in her heart. Weary of strife, she had submitted altogether to the Count's tyranny, for he had regained all his lost ground.

"When all my strength was devoted to enfolding my children," she wrote to me, "could I use it to defy M. de Mortsauf, could I defend myself against his aggressions when I was fighting with death? As I make my onward way, alone and feeble, between the two young, melancholy creatures at my side, I feel an invincible disgust of life. What blow can hurt me, or what affection can I respond to when I see Jacques motionless on the terrace, life no longer beaming in anything but his beautiful eyes, made larger by emaciation, as hollow as an old man's, and where—fatal prognostic—his forward intelligence is contrasted with his bodily weakness? When I see at my side my pretty Madeleine so lively, so fond, so brightly colored, now as pale as the dead; her very hair and eyes seem to me more pallid, she looks at me with languishing eyes as if she were bidding me farewell. No food tempts her, or if she has a fancy for anything, she alarms me by her strange appetites; the innocent child, though one with my heart, blushes as she confesses to them.

"Do what I will, I cannot amuse my children; they smile at me, but the smile is forced from them by my playfulness, and is not spontaneous; they cry because they cannot respond to my fondness. Illness has left them completely run down, even their affection. So you may imagine how dismal Cloche-gourde is. M. de Mortsauf reigns unopposed."

"Oh my glory, my friend!" she wrote to me again,



“you must love me well indeed if you can love me still—can love me, so apathetic as I am, so unresponsive, so petrified by grief.”

At this juncture, when I felt myself more deeply appealed to than ever, when I lived only in her soul, on which I strove to shed the luminous breath of morning and the hope of purpled evenings, I met, in the rooms of the Elysée Bourbon, one of those superb English ladies who are almost queens. Immensely wealthy, the daughter of a race unstained by any *mésalliance* since the time of the Conquest, married to an old man, one of the most distinguished members of the British peerage,—all these advantages were no more than accessories adding to her beauty, her manners, her wit, a faceted luster that dazzled before it charmed you. She was the idol of the day, and reigned all the more despotically over Paris society because she had the qualities indispensable to success, the iron hand in a velvet glove spoken of by Bernadotte.

You know the curious individuality of the English—the impassable and arrogant Channel, the icy St. George's Straits that they set between themselves and those who have not been introduced to them. The human race might be an ant-heap on which they tread; they recognize none of their species but those whom they accept; they do not understand the language even of the rest; those have lips that move and eyes that see, but neither voice nor looks can reach so high; to them the herd are as though they were not. Thus the English are an image of their island where the law rules everything; where in each sphere everything is uniform; where the practice of virtue seems to be the inevitable working of wheels that move at fixed hours.

These fortifications of polished steel built up round an Englishwoman, caged by golden wires into her home, where her feeding trough and drinking cup, her perches and her food are all perfection, lend her irresistible attraction. Never did a nation more elaborately scheme for the hypocrisy of a married woman by placing her always midway between social life and death. For her there is no compromise between shame and honor; the fall is utter, or there is no slip; it is all or nothing—the *To be or not to be* of Hamlet. This

alternative, combined with the habits of disdain to which manners accustom her, makes an Englishwoman a creature apart in the world. She is but a poor creature, virtuous perforce, and ready to abandon herself, condemned to perpetual falsehood buried in her soul; but she is enchanting in form, because the race has thrown everything into form. Hence the beauties peculiar to the women of that country: the exaltation of an affection in which life is compulsorily summed up, their extravagant care of their person, the refinement of their love—so elegantly expressed in the famous scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, in which Shakespeare has with one touch depicted the Englishwoman.

To you, who envy them so many things, what can I say that you do not know about these fair sirens, apparently impenetrable but so quickly known, who believe that love is enough for love, and who taint their pleasures with satiety by never varying them, whose soul has but one note, whose voice but one word—an ocean of love, in which, if a man has not bathed, he will forever remain ignorant of one form of poetic sensuality, just as a man who has never seen the sea must always lack certain chords to his lyre?

You know the purport of these words. My acquaintance with Lady Dudley was notorious. At an age when the senses exert their greatest power over our decisions, and in a man whose fires had been so violently suppressed, the image of the saint who was enduring her long martyrdom at *Cloche-gourde* shone so brightly that he could resist every fascination. This fidelity was the distinction that won me Lady Arabella's attention. My obstinacy increased her passion. What she longed for, like many Englishwomen, was something conspicuous and extraordinary. She craved for spice, for pepper to feed her heart on, as English epicures insist on pungent condiments to revive their palate. The lethargy produced in these women's lives by unflinching perfection in everything about them, and methodical regularity of habit, reacts in a worship of the romantic and difficult. I was incapable of gauging this character. The more I retired into cold disdain, the more eager was Lady Dudley. This contest, of which she boasted, excited some curiosity in cer-

tain drawing-rooms, and this was the first-fruits of satisfaction which made her feel it incumbent on her to triumph. Ah! I should have been saved if only some friend had repeated the odious speech she had uttered concerning Mme. de Mortsauf and me—

“I am sick,” said she, “of this turtle-dove sighing!”

Though I have no wish to justify my crime, I must point out to you, Natalie, that a man has less chances of resisting a woman than you women have of evading our pursuit. Our manners forbid to our sex those tactics of stern repression which in you are baits to tempt the lover, and which indeed propriety requires of you. In us, on the contrary, some jurisprudence of masculine coxcombry treats reserve as ridiculous; we leave you the monopoly of modesty to secure to you the privilege of conferring favors; but reverse the parts, and a man is crushed by satire. Protected as I was by my passion, I was not at an age to be insensible to the threefold attractions of pride, devotion, and beauty. When Lady Arabella laid at my feet the homage paid to her at a ball of which she was the queen, when she watched my eye to read whether I admired her dress, and thrilled with pleasure when she pleased me, I was agitated by her agitation. She stood on ground too whence I could not fly; it was impossible for me to refuse certain invitations in the diplomatic circle; her rank opened every house to her; and with the ingenuity which women can display to obtain the thing they wish for, she contrived at table that the mistress of the house should seat me next to her.

Then she would murmur in my ear—

“If I were loved as Mme. de Mortsauf is, I would sacrifice everything to you.” She proposed the humblest conditions with a smile, she promised uncompromising reticence, or besought me to allow her only to love me. She spoke these words to me one day, satisfying alike the capitulation of a timid conscience and the unbridled cravings of youth—

“Your friend forever, and your mistress when you please!”

Finally she resolved to make my sense of honor the means to my ruin; she bribed my man-servant; and one evening,

after a party where she had shone with such beauty that she was sure of having captivated me, I found her in my rooms. This scandal was heard of in England, where the aristocracy were in as much consternation as Heaven at the fall of its highest angel. Lady Dudley came down from her clouds in the British empyrean, kept nothing but her own fortune, and tried by self-sacrifice to eclipse the woman whose virtue had led to this celebrated scandal. Lady Arabella, like the Devil on the pinnacle of the Temple, took pleasure in showing me the richest kingdoms of her ardent world.

Read my confession, I beseech you, with indulgence. It deals with one of the most interesting problems of human life, with a crisis through which the greater portion of mankind must pass, and which I long to account for, if it were only to light a beacon on the reef. This beautiful English lady, so slender, so fragile, this milk-white woman so crushed, so breakable, so meek, with her refined brow crowned with such soft tan-brown hair—this creature whose brilliancy seems but a transient phosphorescence—has a frame of iron. No horse, however fiery, can defy her sinewy wrist, her hand that seems so weak, and that nothing can tire. She has the foot of the roe, a small, wiry, muscular foot of indescribable beauty of form. Her strength fears no rivalry; no man can keep up with her on horseback; she would win a steeplechase riding a centaur; she shoots stags, and does it without checking her horse. Her frame knows not perspiration; it radiates a glow in the air, and lives in water, or it would perish.

Her passion is quite African; her demands are a tornado like the sand-spouts of the desert—the desert whose burning vastness is to be seen in her eyes, the desert all azure and love, with its unchanging sky and its cool, star-lit nights.

What a contrast to Clochegourde! The East and the West; one attracting to herself the smallest atoms of moisture to nourish her; the other exhaling her soul, enveloping all who were faithful to her in a luminous atmosphere. This one eager and slight; the other calm and solid.

Tell me, have you ever duly considered the general bearing of English habits? Are they not the apotheosis of matter, a definite, premeditated, and skillfully adapted Epi-

cureanism? Whatever she may do or say, England is materialist—unconsciously perhaps. She has religious and moral pretensions from which the divine spirituality, the soul of Catholicism, is absent; its fruitful grace can never be replaced by any hypocrisy, however well acted. She possesses in the highest degree the science of life, which adds a grace to the smallest details of materialism; which makes your slipper the most exquisite slipper in the world; which gives your linen an indescribable fragrance; which lines and perfumes your drawers with cedar; which pours out at a fixed hour a delicious cup of tea, scientifically infused; which banishes dust, and nails down carpets from the very doorstep to the inmost nook of the house; which washes the cellar walls, polishes the door knocker, gives elasticity to the springs of a carriage; which turns all matter into a nutritious pulp, a comfortable, lustrous, and cleanly medium in the midst of which the soul expires in enjoyment, and which produces a terrible monotony of ease; which results in a life uncrossed and devoid of initiative; which, in one word, makes a machine of you.

Thus I came suddenly, in the heart of this English luxury, on a woman perhaps unique of her sex, who entangled me in the meshes of that love born anew from its death, whose prodigality I met with severe austerity—that love which has overpowering charms and an electricity of its own, which often leads you to heaven through the ivory gates of its half-slumbers, or carries you up mounted behind its winged shoulders. A horribly graceless love that laughs at the corpses of those it has slain; love devoid of memory, a cruel love, like English politics, and to which almost every man succumbs.

You understand the problem now. Man is composed of matter and spirit. In him the animal nature culminates and the angel begins. Hence the conflict we all have felt between a future destiny of which we have presentiments, and the memories of our original instincts from which we are not wholly detached—the love of the flesh and the love that is divine. One man amalgamates the two in one; another abstains. This one seeks the whole sex through, to satisfy his

anterior appetites; that one idealizes it in a single woman, who to him epitomizes the universe. Some hover undecided between the raptures of matter and those of the spirit; others spiritualize the flesh and ask of it what it can never give. If, considering these general features of love, you take into account the repulsions and the affinities which, being the outcome of diversity of constitution, presently break the bonds between those who have not tested each other; if you add to this the errors resulting from the hopes of those who live more especially by the mind, by the heart, or by action—who think, or feel, or act—and whose vocation is cheated or misprized in an association of two human beings, each equally complex, you will be largely indulgent to some misfortunes to which society is pitiless.

Well, Lady Arabella satisfies the instincts, the organs, the appetites, the vices, and the virtues of the subtle matter of which we are compounded; she was the mistress of my body. Mme. de Mortsauf was the wife of my soul. The love the mistress could satisfy has its limits; matter is finite, its properties have recognized forces, it is liable to inevitable saturation; I often felt an indescribable void in Paris with Lady Dudley. Infinity is the realm of the heart; love unbounded was at Clochegourde. I was passionately in love with Lady Arabella, and certainly, though the animal in her was supreme, she had also a superior intelligence; her ironical conversation embraced everything.

But I worshiped Henriette. If at night I wept with joy, in the morning I wept with remorse. There are some women shrewd enough to conceal their jealousy under angelic sweetness; these are women who, like Lady Dudley, are past thirty. Women then know how to feel and calculate both at once; they squeeze out the juice of the present and yet think of the future; they can stifle their often quite justifiable groans with the determination of a hunter who does not feel a wound as he rides in pursuit of the bugle call.

Without ever speaking of Mme. de Mortsauf, Arabella tried to kill her in my soul, where she constantly found her, and her own passion flamed higher under the breath of this ineradicable love. To triumph, if possible, by comparisons

to her own advantage, she would never be suspicious, nor provoking, nor curious, as most young women are; but, like a lioness that has carried her prey in her mouth and brought it to her den to devour, she took care that nothing should disturb her happiness, and watched me like an unsubdued conquest. I wrote to Henriette under her very eyes, she never read a single line, she never made the least attempt to know the address on my letters. I was perfectly free. She seemed to have said to herself, "If I lose, I shall blame no one but myself."

And she trusted proudly to a love so devoted that she would have laid down her life without hesitation if I had asked it of her. In fact, she made me believe that if I should abandon her she would at once kill herself.

It was a thing to hear when she sang the praises of the Indian custom for widows to burn themselves on their husband's funeral pyre.

"Though in India the practice is a distinction reserved to the higher castes, and is consequently little appreciated by Europeans, who are incapable of perceiving the proud dignity of the privilege, you must confess," she would say to me, "that in the dead level of our modern manners the aristocracy cannot resume its place unless by exceptional feelings? How can I show the middle class that the blood flowing in my veins is not the same as theirs, if not in dying in another way than they die? Women of no birth can have diamonds, silks, horses, even coats-of-arms, which ought to be ours alone, for a name can be purchased!—But to love, unabashed, in opposition to the law, to die for the idol she has chosen, and make a shroud of the sheets off her bed; to bring earth and heaven into subjection to a man, and thus rob the Almighty of His right to make a god, never to be false to him, not even for virtue's sake—for to refuse him anything in the name of duty is to abandon one's self to something that is not he—whether it be another man or a mere idea, it is a betrayal!—These are the heights to which vulgar women cannot rise; they know only two roads—the highway of virtue or the miry path of the courtesan."

She argued, you see, from pride; she flattered all my van-

ities by deifying them; she set me so high that she could only reach to my knees; all the fascinations of her mind found expression in her slave-like attitude and absolute submission. She would remain a whole day lounging at my feet in silence, gazing at me, waiting on my pleasure like a seraglio slave. What words can describe the first six months when I gave myself up to the enervating joys of an affection full of raptures varied by the knowledge of experience that was concealed under the vehemence of passion. Such joys, a revelation of the poetry of the senses, constitute the strong link that binds young men to women older than themselves; but this link is the convict's chain; it leaves an indelible scar, implanting a premature distaste for fresh and innocent love rich in blossom only, which cannot serve us with alcohol in curiously chased golden cups, enriched with precious stones, sparkling with inexhaustible fires.

When I tasted the enjoyments of which I had dreamed, knowing nothing of them, which I had expressed in my nose-gays, and which the union of souls makes a thousand times more intense, I found no lack of paradoxes to justify myself in my own eyes for the readiness with which I slaked my thirst at this elegant cup. Often when I felt lost in immeasurable lassitude, my soul, freed from my body, flew far from earth, and I fancied that such pleasures were a means of annihilating matter and freeing the spirit for its sublimest flights. Not unfrequently Lady Dudley, like many another woman, took advantage of the excitement superinduced by excessive happiness to bind me by solemn vows; and she could even tempt me into blaspheming the angel at Clochegourde.

Being a traitor, I became a cheat. I wrote to Mme. de Mortsauf as though I were still the boy in the ill-made blue coat of whom she was so fond; but, I own, her gift of second-sight appalled me when I thought of the disaster any indiscretion might bring on the charming castle of my hopes. Often in the midst of my happiness a sudden pang froze me; I heard the name of Henriette spoken by a voice from on high, like the "Cain, where is Abel?" of the Scripture narrative.



My letters remained unanswered. I was in mortal anxiety, and wanted to set out for Clochegourde. Arabella raised no obstacles, but she spoke as a matter of course of going with me to Touraine. Her fancy, spurred by difficulty, her presentiments, justified by more happiness than she had hoped for, had given birth in her to a real affection, which she now meant should be unique. Her womanly wit showed her that this journey might be made a means of detaching me completely from Mme. de Mortsauf; and I, blinded by alarm and misled by genuine guilelessness, did not see the snare in which I was to be caught.

Lady Dudley proposed the fullest concessions, and anticipated every objection. She agreed to remain in the country near Tours, unknown, disguised, never to go out by daylight, and to choose for our meetings an hour of the night when no one could recognize us.

I started on horseback from Tours for Clochegourde. I had my reasons for this; I needed a horse for my nocturnal expeditions, and I had an Arab, sent to the Marchioness by Lady Hester Stanhope, which I had taken in exchange for the famous picture by Rembrandt now hanging in her drawing-room in London, after it had come into my hands in so singular a way.

I took the road I had gone on foot six years before, and paused under the walnut-tree. From thence I saw Mme. de Mortsauf, in a white dress, on the terrace. I flew towards her with the swiftness of lightning, and in a few minutes was below the wall, traversing the distance in a direct line, as if I were riding a steeplechase. She heard the prodigious leaps of the Swallow of the Desert; and when I pulled up sharp at the corner of the terrace, she said, "Ah! Here you are!"

These four words struck me dumb. Then she knew of my adventure! Who had told her of it?—Her mother, whose odious letter she subsequently showed me. The indifference of that weak voice, formerly so full of vitality—the dead, colorless tone confessed a mature sorrow and breathed, as it

were, a perfume of flowers cut off beyond all recovery. The tempest of my infidelity, like the floods of the Loire that bury the land past redemption in sand, had passed over her soul and made a desert where rich meadows had been green. I led my horse in by the side gate; he knelt down on the grass at my command; and the Countess, who had come forward with a slow step, exclaimed, "What a beautiful creature!"

She stood with her arms crossed that I might not take her hand, and I understood her intention.

"I will go and tell M. de Mortsauf," said she, and turned away.

I remained standing, quite confounded, letting her go, watching her—noble, deliberate, and proud as ever; whiter than I had ever seen her, her brow stamped with the yellow seal of the bitterest melancholy, and hanging her head like a lily weighed down by too much rain.

"Henriette!" I cried, with the passion of a man who feels himself dying.

She did not turn round, she did not pause; she scorned to tell me that she had taken back that name, that she would no longer answer to it; she walked on. In that terrible valley where millions of men must be lying turned to dust, while their soul now animates the surface of the globe, I may find myself very small in the midst of the crowd closely packed under the luminous dignities who shall light it up with their glory; but even there I shall be less utterly crushed than I was as I gazed at that white figure going up, up—as an undeviating flood mounts the streets of a town—up to Cloche-gourde, her home, the glory and the martyrdom of this Christian Dido!

I cursed Arabella in one word that would have killed her had she heard it—and she had given up everything for me, as we leave all for God! I stood lost in an ocean of thought, seeing endless pain on every side of me.

Then I saw them all coming down; Jacques running with the impetuosity of his age; Madeleine, a gazelle with pathetic eyes, followed with her mother. M. de Mortsauf came towards me with open arms, clasped me to him, and kissed me

on both cheeks, saying, "Félix, I have heard—I owed my life to you!"

Mme. de Mortsauf stood with her back to us, under pretense of showing the horse to Madeleine, who was amazed.

"The devil!" cried the Count in a fury, "that is a woman all over!—They are looking at your horse."

Madeleine turned and came to me. I kissed her hand, looking at the Countess, who reddened.

"Madeleine seems much better," said I.

"Poor little girl!" replied the Countess, kissing her forehead.

"Yes, for the moment they are all well," said the Count. "I alone, my dear Félix, am a wreck, like an old tower about to fall."

"The General still suffers from his black dragons, it would seem," said I, looking at Mme. de Mortsauf.

"We all have our *blue devils*," she replied. "That, I think, is the English word?"

We went up to the house, all walking together, all feeling that something serious had happened. She had no wish to be alone with me; in short, I was a visitor.

"By the way, what about your horse?" said the Count, when we went out.

"You see," retorted the Countess, "I was wrong to think about it, and equally wrong not to think about it."

"Why, yes," said he; "there is a time for everything."

"I will go to him," said I, finding this cold reception unendurable. "I alone can unsaddle him and put him up properly. My groom is coming from Chinon by coach, and he will rub him down."

"Is the groom from England too?" said she.

"They are only made there," replied the Count, becoming cheerful as he saw his wife depressed.

His wife's coolness was an opportunity for tacit opposition; he loaded me with kindness. I learned what a burden a husband's friendship can be. Do not suppose that it is when the wife lavishes an affection of which he seems to be robbed, that her husband's attentions are overpowering to a noble soul! No. It is when that love has fled that they are odious

and unendurable. A friendly understanding, which is the indispensable condition of such attachments, is then seen as a mere means; it then is a burden, and as horrible as all means are when no longer justified by the ends.

"My dear Félix," said the Count, taking my hands, and pressing them affectionately, "you must forgive Mme. de Mortsauf. Women must be fractious, their weakness is their excuse; they cannot possibly have the equable temper which gives us strength of character. She has the greatest regard for you. I know it; but——"

While the Count was speaking, Mme. de Mortsauf moved gradually away from us, so as to leave us together.

"Félix," said he in an undertone, as he looked at his wife returning to the house with her two children, "I cannot think what has been going on in Mme. de Mortsauf's mind, but within the last six weeks her temper has completely altered. She who used to be so gentle, so devoted, has become incredibly sulky."

Manette afterwards told me that the Countess had fallen into a state of dejection which left her insensible to the Count's aggravations. Finding no tender spot into which to thrust his darts, the man had become as fidgety as a boy when the insect he is torturing ceases to wriggle. At this moment he needed a confidant, as an executioner needs a mate.

"Try to question Mme. de Mortsauf," he went on after a pause. "A woman always has secrets from her husband, but to you she will perhaps confide the secret of her trouble. If it should cost me half my remaining days of life, and half my fortune, I would sacrifice everything to make her happy. She is so indispensable to my existence. If in my old age I should miss that angel from my side, I should be the most miserable of men! I would hope to die easy. Tell her she will not have to put up with me for long. I, Félix, my poor friend,—I am going fast; I know it. I hide the dreadful truth from all the world; why distress them before the time? Still the pylorus, my good friend. I have at last mastered the causes of the malady: my sensitive feelings are killing me. In fact, all our emotions converge on the gastric centers——"

"So that people of strong feeling die of indigestion," said I with a smile.

"Do not laugh, Félix; nothing is truer. Too great a grief over-excites the great sympathetic nerve. This excessive sensibility keeps up a constant irritation of the mucous membrane of the stomach. If this condition continues, it leads to disturbance of the digestive functions, at first imperceptible; the secretions are vitiated, the appetite is morbid, and digestion becomes uncertain; ere long acute suffering supervenes, worse and more frequently every day. Finally the organic mischief reaches a climax; it is as though some poison were lurking in every bowl. The mucous membrane thickens, the valve of the pylorus hardens, and a scirrhus forms there of which the patient must die. Well, that is my case, my dear boy. The induration is progressing; nothing can stop it. Look at my straw-colored skin, my dry, bright eye, my excessive emaciation! I am withering up. What can you expect? I brought the germ of the complaint in me from exile: I went through so much at that time.

"And my marriage, which might have repaired the mischief done during the emigration, far from soothing my ulcerated soul, only reopened the wound. What have I found here? Eternal alarms on account of my children, domestic trials, a fortune to be patched up, economy which entailed a thousand privations I had to inflict on my wife, while I was the first to suffer from them.

"And, above all, to you alone can I confide the secret—this is my greatest trouble. Though Blanche is an angel, she does not understand me; she knows nothing of my sufferings, she only frets them. I forgive her. It is a terrible thing to say, my friend, but a less virtuous woman would have made me happier by little soothing ways which never occur to Blanche, for she is as great a simpleton as a baby! Add to this that the servants do nothing but plague me. They are perfect owls! I speak French, and they hear Greek.

"When our fortune was somewhat amended by hook and by crook, when I began to be less worried, the mischief was done;

I had reached the stage of morbid appetite. Then I had that bad illness which Origet so entirely misunderstood. In short, at this moment I have not six months to live."

I listened to the Count in terror. On seeing the Countess, the glitter of her hard eyes and the straw-colored complexion of her brow had struck me. I now dragged the Count back to the house as I pretended to listen to his complaining, interspersed with medical dissertations, but I was thinking only of Henriette, and was bent on studying her.

I found the Countess in the drawing-room; she was listening to a lesson in mathematics that the Abbé de Dominis was giving to Jacques, while she showed Madeleine a stitch in tapestry. Formerly she would have found means, on the day of my arrival, to put off such occupations, and devote herself to me; but my love was so deep and true that I buried in the depths of my heart the sorrow I felt at the contrast between the past and present; for I could see that terrible yellow tinge on her heavenly face, like the reflection of a divine light which Italian painters have given to the faces of their female saints. I felt in my soul the cold blast of death. When the blaze of her eyes fell on me, bereft now of the liquid moisture in which her looks had floated, I shuddered; and I then observed certain changes due to grief which I had not noticed out of doors. The fine lines which, when I had last seen her, were but faintly traced on her forehead, were now deep furrows; her temples, bluely veined, were dry and hollow; her eyes were sunk under reddened brows and had dark circles round them; she had the look of fruit on which bruises are beginning to show, and which has turned prematurely yellow from the ravages of a worm within.

And was it not I, whose sole ambition it had been to pour happiness in a full tide into her soul, who had shed bitterness into the spring whence her life derived strength and her courage refreshment?

I sat down by her, and said in a voice tearful with repentance—

"Is your health satisfactory?"

"Yes," she replied, looking straight into my eyes,

"Here is my health," and she pointed to Madeleine and Jacques.

Madeleine, who had come out victorious from her struggle with nature, at fifteen was a woman; she had grown, the tint of a China rose bloomed in her dark cheeks; she had lost the light heedlessness of a child that looks everything in the face, and had begun to cast down her eyes. Her movements, like her mother's, were rare and sober; her figure slight, and the charms of her bust already filling out. A woman's vanity had smoothed her fine black hair, parted in two bands on her Spanish-looking brow. She had a look of the pretty mediæval busts, so refined in outline, so slender in mold, that the eye that lingers on them fears lest it should break them; but health, the fruit that had ripened after so much care, had given her cheek the velvety texture of the peach, and a silky down on her neck which caught the light—as it did in her mother.

She would live! God had written it, sweet bud of the loveliest of human blossoms, on the long lashes of your eyelids, on the slope of your shoulders, which promised to be as beautiful as your mother's had been!

This nut-brown maiden with the growth of a poplar, was a contrast indeed to Jacques, a fragile youth of seventeen, whose head looked too large, for his brow had expanded so rapidly as to give rise to alarms, whose fevered, weary eyes were in keeping with a deep sonorous voice. The throat gave out too great a volume of sound, just as the eye betrayed too much thought. Here Henriette's intellect, soul, and heart were consuming with eager fires a too frail body; for Jacques had the milk-white complexion touched with the burning flush that is seen in young English girls marked by the scourge to be felled within a limited time—delusive health!

Following a gesture by which Henriette, after pointing to Madeleine, made me look at Jacques, tracing geometrical figures and algebraical sums on a blackboard before the Abbé, I was startled at this glimpse of death hidden under roses, and respected the unhappy mother's mistake.

"When I see them so well, joy silences all my griefs,

as, indeed, they are silent and vanish when I see those two ill.—My friend,” said she, her eyes beaming with motherly pleasure, “if other affections desert us, those that find their reward here—duties fulfilled and crowned with success—make up for defeat endured elsewhere. Jacques, like you, will be a highly cultivated man, full of virtuous learning; like you, he will be an honor to his country—which he may help to govern perhaps, guided by you, who will hold so high a place—but I will try to make him faithful to his first affections. Madeleine, dear creature, has already an exquisite heart. She is as pure as the snow on the highest Alpine summit; she will have the devotedness and the sweet intelligence of woman; she is proud, she will be worthy of the Lenoncourts!

“The mother, once so distraught, is now very happy—happy in an infinite and unmixed happiness; yes, my life is full, my life is rich. As you see, God has given me joys that unfold from permitted affection, has infused bitterness into those to which I was being tempted by a dangerous attachment.”

“Well done!” cried the Abbé gleefully. “M. le Vicomte knows as much as I do——”

Jacques, as he finished the demonstration, coughed a little.

“That is enough for to-day, my dear Abbé,” said the Countess in some agitation. “Above all, no chemistry lesson! Go out riding, Jacques,” she added, kissing her son with the justifiable rapture of a mother’s caress, her eyes fixed on me as if to insult my remembrances. “Go, dear, and be prudent.”

“But you have not answered my question,” said I, as she followed Jacques with a long look. “Do you suffer any pain?”

“Yes, sometimes, in my chest. If I were in Paris I could rise to the honors of gastritis, the fashionable complaint.”

“My mother suffers a great deal, and often,” replied Madeleine.

“So my health really interests you?” said she to me.

Madeleine, astonished at the deep irony with which the words were spoken, looked at us by turns; my eyes were



counting the pink flowers on the cushions of the gray and green furniture in the room.

"The situation is intolerable!" I said in her ear.

"Is it of my making?" she asked. "My dear boy," she said aloud, affecting the cruel cheerfulness with which women give lightness to revenge, "do you know nothing of modern history? Are not France and England always foes? Why, Madeleine knows that; she knows that they are divided by a vast sea, a cold sea, a stormy sea."

The vases on the chimney had been replaced by candelabra, no doubt to deprive me of the pleasure of filling them with flowers; I found them at a later day in her room. When my servant arrived, I went out to give my orders; he had brought me a few things that I wished to carry up to my room.

"Félix," said the Countess, "make no mistake! My aunt's old room is Madeleine's now. Yours is over the Count's."

Guilty as I was, I had a heart, and all these speeches were poniard thrusts coldly directed to the tenderest spots, which they seemed chosen to hit. Mental suffering is not a fixed quantity; it is in proportion to the sensitiveness of the soul, and the Countess had bitterly gone through the whole scale of anguish; but for this very reason the best woman will always be cruel in proportion to what her kindness has been. I looked at her, but she kept her head down.

I went up to my new room, which was pretty—white and green. There I melted into tears. Henriette heard me; she came in, bringing me a bunch of flowers.

"Henriette," said I, "have you come to such a point that you cannot forgive the most excusable fault?"

"Never call me Henriette," she said. "She has ceased to exist, poor woman; but you will always find Mme. de Mortsauf an attached friend who will listen to you and care for you. Félix, we will talk later. If you still have an affection for me let me get accustomed to see you, and as soon as words are a less heart-rending effort, as soon as I have recovered a little courage—then, and not till then. You see the valley?" and she pointed to the river. "It hurts me—but I love it still."

"Oh, perish England and all its women! I shall send in my resignation to the King. I will die here, forgiven!"

"No, no; love her—love that woman! Henriette is no more; this is no jest, as you will see!"

She left the room; the tone of her last speech showed how deeply she was wounded.

I hurried after her; I stopped her, saying—

"Then you no longer love me?"

"You have pained me more than all the others put together. To-day I am suffering less, and I love you less: but it is only in England that they say, 'Neither never, nor forever.'—Here we only say, 'forever.' Be good; do not add to my pain; and if you too are hurt, remember that I can still live on."

She withdrew her hand which I had taken; it was cold, inert but clammy, and she was off like an arrow along the passage where this really tragical scene had taken place.

In the course of dinner the Count had a torture in store for me of which I had not dreamed.

"Then the Marchioness of Dudley is not in Paris?" he said.

I colored crimson and replied, "No."

"She is not at Tours," he went on.

"She is not divorced; she may go to England. Her husband would be delighted if she would return to him," I said excitedly.

"Has she any children?" asked Mme. de Mortsauf in a husky voice.

"Two sons," said I.

"Where are they?"

"In England with their father."

"Now, Félix, be candid. Is she as lovely as people say?"

"Can you ask him such a question," cried the Countess. "Is not the woman a man loves always the most beautiful of her sex?"

"Yes, always," I replied with emphasis, and a flashing look that she could not meet.

"You are in luck," the Count went on. "Yes, you are a lucky rascal! Ah! when I was young my head would have been turned by such a conquest——"

"That is enough!" said Mme. de Mortsauf, glancing from Madeleine to her father.

"I am not a boy," said the Count, who loved to think himself young again.

After dinner the Countess led the way down to the terrace, and when we were there she exclaimed—

"What, there are women who can sacrifice their children for a man! Fortune and the world, yes—I understand that; eternity perhaps! But her children! To give up her children!"

"Yes, and such women would be glad to have more to sacrifice; they give everything——"

To the Countess the world seemed to be upside down; her ideas were in confusion. Startled by the magnitude of this idea, suspecting that happiness might justify this immolation, hearing within her the outcries of the rebellious flesh, she stood aghast, gazing at her spoiled life. Yes, she went through a minute of agonizing doubts. But she came out great and saintly, holding her head high.

"Love her truly, Félix; love that woman," she said with tears in her eyes. "She will be my happier sister. I forgive her the ill she has done me if she can give you what you could never have found here, what you could never find in me. You are right; I never told you that I could love you as you of the world love—and I never did love you so.—Still, if she is not a true mother, how can she love?"

"Dear saint," said I, "I should have to be much less agitated than I now am to explain to you how victoriously you soar above her head; that she is a creature of earth, the daughter of a fallen race, while you are the daughter of Heaven, the angel of my adoration; that you have my heart and she has only my body.—She knows it; she is in despair over it, and she would change places with you even if the cruellest martyrdom were the price of the exchange.

"But all this is past remedy. Yours are my soul, my thoughts, my purest love, yours are my youth and my old

age; hers are the desires and raptures of transient passion. You will fill my memory in all its extent; she will be utterly forgotten."

"Tell me, tell me—oh, tell me this, my dear!" She sat down on a bench and melted into tears. "Then virtue, Félix, a saintly life, motherly love, are not a mere blunder. Oh, pour that balm on my sorrows! Repeat those words which restore me to the bliss for which I hoped to strive in equal flight with you! Bless me with a sacred word, a look, and I can forgive you the misery I have endured these two months past."

"Henriette, there are mysteries in a man's life of which you know nothing. When I met you, I was at an age when sentiment can smother the cravings of our nature; still, several scenes, of which the memory will warm me in the hour of death, must have shown you that I had almost outlived that stage, and it was your unfailing triumph that you could prolong its mute delights. Love without possession is upheld by the very exasperations of hope; but a moment comes when every feeling is pure suffering to us who are not in any respect like you. A power is ours which we cannot abdicate, or we are not men. The heart, bereft of the nourishment it needs, feeds on itself and sinks into exhaustion, which is not death but which leads to it. Nature cannot be persistently cheated; at the least accident it asserts itself with a vehemence akin to madness.

"No, I did not love, I thirsted in the desert!"

"In the desert!" she bitterly echoed, pointing to the valley. "And how he argues," she went on; "what subtle distinctions. Believers have not so much wit!"

"Henriette," said I, "do not let us quarrel for the sake of a few over-bold expressions. My soul has never wavered, but I was no longer master of my senses. That woman knows that you are the only one I love. She plays a secondary part in my life; she knows it, and is resigned. I have a right to desert her as we desert a courtesan."

"What then?"

"She says she shall kill herself," said I, thinking that this resolution would startle Henriette.

But as she heard me, she gave one of those scornful smiles that are even more expressive than the ideas they represent. "My dearest Conscience," I went on, "if you gave me credit for my resistance, and for the temptations that led to my ruin, you would understand this fated——"

"Yes, fated!" she exclaimed, "I believed in you too completely. I fancied you would never lack the virtue a priest can practice, and—M. de Mortsauf!" she added, with satirical emphasis.

"It is all over," she went on, after a pause. "I owe much to you, my friend; you have extinguished the light of earthly life in me. The hardest part of the road is past; I am growing old, I am often ailing, almost invalided. I could never be the glittering fairy, showering favors on you. Be faithful to Lady Arabella.—And Madeleine, whom I was bringing up so well for you, whose will she be? Poor Madeleine, poor Madeleine!" she repeated, like a sorrowful burden. "If you could have heard her say, 'Mother, you are not nice to Félix.' Sweet creature!"

She looked at me in the mild rays of the setting sun that slanted through the foliage; and, filled with some mysterious pity for the ruins of us both, she looked back on our chastened past, giving herself up to reminiscences that were mutual. We took up the thread of our memories, our eyes went from the valley to the vineyard, from the windows of Cloche-gourde to Frapesle, filling our day-dream with the perfumes of our nosegays, the romance of our hopes. It was her last piece of self-indulgence, enjoyed with the guilelessness of a Christian soul. The scene, to us so full of meaning, had plunged us both into melancholy. She believed my words, and felt herself in the heaven where I had placed her.

"My friend," said she, "I submit to God, for His hand is in all this."

It was not till later that I understood all the deep meaning of this speech.

We slowly went back by the terraces. She took my arm and leaned on me, resigned, bleeding, but having bound up her wounds.

"This is human life," said she. "What had M. de Mortsauf done to deserve his fate? All this proves the existence of another world. Woe to those who complain of walking in the narrow way."

She went on to estimate the value of life, to contemplate it so profoundly in its various aspects, that her calm balance showed me what disgust had come over her of everything here below. As we reached the top steps she took her hand from my arm, and said these last words—

"Since God has given us the faculty and love of happiness, must He not take care of those innocent souls that have known nothing but affliction on earth? Either this is so, or there is no God, and our life is but a cruel jest."

With these words she hastily went indoors, and I found her presently lying on the sofa, stricken as though she had heard the Voice which confounded Saint Paul.

"What is the matter?" said I.

"I no longer know what virtue means," said she. "I have ceased to be conscious of my own."

We both remained petrified, listening to the echo of these words as to a stone flung into a chasm.

"If I have been mistaken in my life, it is she who is right—*she!*" added Mme. de Mortsauf.

Thus her last indulgence had led to this last struggle.

When the Count came in, she, who never complained, said she felt ill; I implored her to define her pain, but she refused to say more, and went to bed, leaving me a victim to remorse, one regret leading to another.

Madeleine went with her mother, and on the following day I heard from her that the Countess had had an attack of sickness, brought on, as she said, by the violent agitation she had gone through. And so I, who would have given my life for her, was killing her.

"My dear Count," said I to M. de Mortsauf, who insisted on my playing backgammon, "I think the Countess is very seriously ill; there is yet time to save her. Send for Origet, and entreat her to follow his orders——"

"Origet! Who killed me!" cried he, interrupting me. "No, no. I will consult Charbonneau."

All through that week, especially during the first day or two, everything was torture to me, an incipient paralysis of the heart, wounded vanity, a wounded soul. Until one has been the center of everything, of every look and sigh, the vital principle, the focus from which others derived their light, one cannot know how horrible a void can be. The same things were there, but the spirit that animated them was extinct, like a flame that is blown out. I understood now the frightful necessity lovers feel never to meet again when love is dead. Think what it is to be nobody where one has reigned supreme, to find the cold silence of death where the glad days of life had glowed. Such comparisons are crushing. I soon began even to regret the miserable ignorance of every joy that had blighted my youth. My despair was so overpowering, indeed, that the Countess was touched, I believe.

One day, after dinner, when we were all walking by the river, I made a final effort to gain forgiveness. I begged Jacques to take his sister a little way in front; I left the Count to himself, and taking Mme. Mortsau down to the punt:

"Henriette," said I, "one word of mercy, or I will throw myself into the Indre! I fell, it is true; but am I not like a dog in my devoted attachment? I come back as he does, like him full of shame; if he does wrong he is punished, but he adores the hand that hits him; scourge me, but give me back your heart."

"Poor boy," said she. "Are you not as much as ever my son?"

She took my arm and slowly rejoined Jacques and Madeleine with whom she went homewards, leaving me to the Count, who began to talk politics *à propos* to his neighbors.

"Let us go in," said I; "you are bareheaded, and the evening dew may do you some harm."

"You can pity me—you, my dear Félix!" replied he, misapprehending my intentions. "My wife never will comfort me—on principle perhaps."

Never of old would she have left me alone with her husband;

now I had to find excuses for being with her. She was with the children explaining the rules of backgammon to Jacques.

"There," said the Count, always jealous of the affection she gave to her two children; "there, it is for them that I am persistently neglected. Husbands, my dear Félix, go to the wall; the most virtuous woman on earth finds a way of satisfying her craving to steal the affection due to her husband."

She still caressed the children, making no reply.

"Jacques," said he, "come here."

Jacques made some difficulty.

"Your father wants you,—go, my boy," said his mother, pushing him.

"They love me by order," said the old man, who sometimes perceived the position.

"Monsieur," said she, stroking Madeleine's smooth bands of hair again and again, "do not be unjust to us hapless wives: life is not always easy to bear, and perhaps a mother's children are her virtues!"

"My dear," said the Count, who was pleased to be logical, "what you say amounts to this: that, but for their children, women would have no virtue, but would leave their husbands in the lurch."

The Countess rose hastily, and went out on to the steps with Madeleine.

"Such is marriage, my dear boy," said the Count. "Do you mean to imply by walking out of the room that I am talking nonsense?" he cried, taking Jacques's hand and following his wife, to whom he spoke with flashing looks of fury.

"Not at all, monsieur, but you frightened me. Your remark wounded me terribly," she went on in a hollow voice, with the glance of a criminal at me. "If virtue does not consist in self-sacrifice for one's children and one's husband, what is virtue?"

"Self-sa-cri-fice!" echoed the Count, rapping out each syllable like a blow on his victim's heart. "What is it that you sacrifice to your children? What do you sacrifice to



me? Whom? What? Answer—will you answer? What is going on then? What do you mean?”

“Monsieur,” said she, “would you be content to be loved for God’s sake, or to know that your wife was virtuous for virtue’s sake?”

“Madame is right,” said I, speaking in a tone of emotion that rang in the two hearts into which I cast my hopes forever ruined, and which I stilled by the expression of the greatest grief of all, its hollow cry extinguishing the quarrel, as all is silence when a lion roars. “Yes, the noblest privilege conferred on us by reason, is that we may dedicate our virtues to those beings whose happiness is of our making, and whom we make happy not out of self-interest or sense of duty, but from involuntary and inexhaustible affection.”

A tear glistened in Henriette’s eye.

“And, my dear Count, if by chance a woman were involuntarily subjugated by some feeling alien to those imposed on her by society, you must confess that the more irresistible that feeling the more virtuous would she be in stifling it—in *sacrificing herself* to her children and her husband.

“This theory, however, is not applicable to me, since I unfortunately am an example to the contrary; nor to you, whom it can never concern.”

A burning but clammy hand was laid on mine, and rested there, in silence.

“You have a noble soul, Félix,” said the Count, putting his arm not ungraciously round his wife’s waist, and drawing her to him, as he said: “Forgive me, my dear—a poor invalid who longs to be loved more, no doubt, than he deserves.”

“Some hearts are all generosity,” said she, leaning her head on the Count’s shoulder, and he took the speech for himself.

The mistake caused some strange revulsion in the Countess. She shuddered, her comb fell out, her hair fell down, and she turned pale; her husband, who was supporting her, gave a deep groan as he saw her faint away. He took her up as he might have taken his daughter, and carried her on to the sofa in the drawing-room, where we stood beside her.

Henriette kept my hand in hers as if to say that we alone knew the secret of this scene, apparently so simple, but so terribly heart-rending to her.

"I was wrong," she said in a low voice, at a moment when the Count had gone to fetch a glass of orange-flower water. "A thousand times wrong in treating you so as to drive you to despair when I ought to have admitted you to mercy. My dear, you are adorably kind; I alone can know how kind.—Yes, I know, some forms of kindness are inspired by passion. Men have many ways of being kind—from disdain, from impulse, from self-interest, from indolence of temper; but you, my friend, have been simply, absolutely kind."

"If so," said I, "remember that all that is great in me comes from you. Do you not know that I am wholly what you have made me?"

"Such a speech is enough for a woman's happiness," she answered, just as the Count came in. "I am better," said she, rising. "I want some fresh air."

We all went down to the terrace, now scented by the acacias still in bloom. She had taken my right arm and pressed it to her heart, thus expressing her painful thoughts; but, to use her own words, it was a pain she loved. She wished, no doubt, to be alone with me; but her imagination, unpracticed in woman's wiles, suggested no reason for dismissing the children and her husband; so we talked of indifferent matters while she racked her brain trying to find a moment when she could at last pour out her heart into mine.

"It is a very long time since I took a drive," said she at length, seeing the evening so fine. "Will you give the orders, monsieur, that I may make a little round?"

She knew that no explanation was possible before prayer-time, and feared that the Count would want a game of backgammon. She might indeed come out here again, on this sheltered terrace, after the Count was gone to bed; but perhaps she was afraid to linger under these boughs through which the light fell with such a voluptuous play, or to walk by the parapet whence our eyes could trace the course of

the Indre through the meadows. Just as a cathedral, with its gloomy and silent vault suggests prayer, so does foliage spangled by moonlight, perfumed with piercing scents, and alive with the mysterious sounds of spring, stir every fiber and relax the will. The country, which calms an old man's passions, fires those of youthful hearts—and we knew it.

Two peals of a bell called us to prayers. The Countess started.

"My dear Henriette, what ails you?"

"Henriette is no more," said she. "Do not call her back to life again; she was exacting and capricious. Now you have a friend whose virtue is confirmed by the words which Heaven must have dictated to you. We will speak of this later. Let us be punctual for prayers. It is my turn to read them to-day."

When the Countess used the words in which she besought God to preserve us against all the adversities of life, she gave them an emphasis which I was not alone in noticing; she seemed to have used her gift of second sight to discern the dreadful agitation she was fated to go through in consequence of my clumsiness in forgetting my agreement with Arabella.

"We have time to play three hits while the horses are put in," said the Count, leading me off to the drawing-room. "Then you will drive with my wife. I shall go to bed."

Like all our games, this one was stormy. From her own room or Madeleine's the Countess could hear her husband's voice.

"You make a strange misuse of hospitality," she said to her husband when she came back to the room.

I looked at her in bewilderment; I could not get used to her sternness; in former times she would never have tried to shield me from the Count's tyranny; she had liked to see me sharing her penalties and enduring them patiently for love of her.

"I would give my life," said I in her ear, "to hear you murmur once more—*Poor dear, poor dear!*"

She looked down, recalling the occasion to which I alluded; her eyes turned on me with a sidelong glance; and expressed

the joy of a woman who sees the most fugitive accents of her heart more highly prized than the deepest delights of any other love.

Then, as ever when she had done me such an injustice, I forgave her, feeling that she understood me. The Count was losing; he said he was tired, to break off the game, and we went to walk round the lawn while waiting for the carriage. No sooner had he left us than my face beamed so vividly with gladness, that the Countess questioned me by a look of surprise and inquiry.

"Henriette still lives," I said; "I still am loved! You wound me with too evident intention to break my heart; I may yet be happy."

"There was but a shred of the woman left," she said in terror, "and you at this moment have it in your grasp. God be praised! He gives me the strength to endure the martyrdom I have deserved.—Yes, I still love; I was near falling; the Englishwoman throws a light into the gulf."

We got into the carriage, and the coachman waited for orders.

"Go by the avenue to the Chinon road, and come home by the Landes de Charlemagne and the Saché road."

"What is to-day?" I asked too eagerly.

"Saturday."

"Then do not drive that way, madame; on Saturday evenings the road is crowded with noisy bumpkins going to Tours, and we shall meet their carts."

"Do as I say," said the Countess to the coachman.

We knew each other too well, and every inflection of tone, endless as they were, to disguise the most trifling feeling. Henriette had understood everything.

"You did not think of the country bumpkins when you chose this evening," said she, with a faint tinge of irony. "Lady Dudley is at Tours. Tell no falsehoods; she is waiting for you near here.—What day is it—bumpkins—carts!" she went on. "Did you ever make such remarks when we used to go out together?"

"They prove that I have forgotten all about Cloche-gourde," I said simply.

"She is waiting for you?"

"Yes."

"At what hour?"

"Between eleven and midnight."

"Where?"

"On the Landes."

"Do not deceive me.—Not under the walnut-tree?"

"On the Landes."

"We will be there," said she. "I shall see her."

On hearing these words I regarded my fate as definitely settled. I determined to marry Lady Dudley and so put an end to the dreadful conflict which really threatened to exhaust my nerves, and to destroy by such constant friction the delicate pleasures which are like the bloom on a fruit. My savage silence wounded the Countess, whose magnanimity was not yet fully known to me.

"Do not be provoked with me, dear," said she in her golden tones. "This is my penance. You will never find such love as lies here," and she placed her hand on her heart. "Did I not confess to you that the Marchioness of Dudley has saved me? The stain is hers; I do not envy her. Mine is the glorious love of the angels!—Since you came I have traveled over a vast extent of country; I have pronounced judgment on life. Uplift the soul and you rend it; the higher you rise the less sympathy you find; instead of suffering in the valley you suffer in the air, like an eagle soaring up and bearing in his heart an arrow shot by some clumsy shepherd. I know now that heaven and earth are incompatible. Yes, and for those who can dwell in the celestial zone God alone is possible. Then our soul must be detached from all things earthly.

"We must love our friends as we love our children—for their sake, not for our own. We are ourselves the source of our woes and griefs. My heart will rise higher than the eagle soars; there is a love which will never fail me.

"As to living the life of this earth, it hinders us too much, by making the selfishness of the senses predominate over the spirituality of the angel that is in us. The joys we get

from passion are horribly stormy, and paid for by enervating fears that break the springs of the soul.

"I have stood on the shore of the sea where these tempests roar, I have seen them too near; they have caught me in their clouds; the wave did not always break at my feet, I have felt its rough embrace freezing my heart; I must retire to the heights, I should perish on the strand of that vast ocean. In you, as in all who have brought me sorrow, I see a guardian of my virtue. My life has been mingled with anguish, happily in proportion to my strength, and has been there preserved pure from evil passions, finding no beguiling repose, but always ready for God.

"Our attachment was the insane attempt, the hopeless effort, of two guileless children who tried to satisfy at once their own hearts, man and God.—Folly, Félix!—Ah!" she asked, after a pause. "What does that woman call you?"

"Amédée," said I. "Félix is another creature, who can never be known to anyone but you."

"Henriette dies hard," said she, with a faint, pious smile. "But she will die," she went on, "in the first effort of the humble Christian, the proud mother, the woman whose virtues, tottering yesterday, are confirmed to-day.

"What can I say?—Yes, yes; my life has been uniform in its greatest as in its least circumstances. The heart to which the first rootlets of affection ought to have attached themselves—my mother's heart—was closed to me, in spite of my persistently seeking a cranny into which I could steal. I was a girl, the last child after the death of three boys, and I vainly strove to fill their place in my parents' affections; I could not heal the wound inflicted on the family pride. When, having got through that melancholy childhood, I knew my adorable aunt, death soon snatched her from me. M. de Mortsau, to whom I devoted my life, struck me persistently without respite,—without knowing it, poor man! His love is full of the artless selfishness of our children's love. He knows nothing of the pangs he causes me; he is always forgiven.

"My children, my darling children, flesh of my flesh in all their sufferings, soul of my soul in their characters, like

me in nature, in their innocent joys—were not those children given to me to show how much strength and patience there is in mothers? Oh, yes, my children are my virtues! You know whether I have been scourged by them, through them, in spite of them. To be a mother was to me to purchase the right of perpetual suffering.

“When Hagar cried in the desert an angel made a fount of pure water spring for that too well-beloved slave. But when the limpid brook to which you desired to lead me (do you remember?) flowed round Clochegourde, for me it ran with bitter waters. Yes, you have brought incredible suffering on me. God will no doubt forgive one who has known affection only through suffering.

“Still, though the acutest anguish I have known has been brought upon me by you, perhaps I deserved it. God is not unjust. Yes, Félix, a kiss given by stealth is perhaps a crime; and perhaps I have paid thus dearly for the steps I have taken to get ahead of my husband and children when walking out in the evening, so as to be alone with memories and thoughts which were not given to them, since, while walking on in front, my soul was wedded to another! When the inmost self shrinks and shrivels, to fill only the spot offered to an embrace, that is perhaps a heinous crime! When a wife stoops that her husband’s kiss may fall on her hair, so as to be entirely neutral, it is a crime! It is a crime to count on a future built up on death, a crime to dream of a future motherhood without terrors, of beautiful children playing in the evening with a father worshiped by all, under the softened gaze of a happy mother. Ah, I have sinned, I have sinned greatly! I have even found pleasure in the penance inflicted by the Church, which insufficiently atoned for these faults to which the priest was surely too indulgent. But God, no doubt, has set retribution in the very heart of the sin itself, by making him for whom it was committed the instrument of His vengeance! Giving you my hair—was not that a promise? Why did I love to wear white? I fancied myself more like your Lily; did not you see me for the first time in a white dress? Alas! And I have loved my children the less, for every ardent

affection is stolen from those that are due. So you see, Félix, all suffering has a meaning.—Strike me, strike me harder than M. de Mortsauf and my children could.

“That woman is an instrument of God’s wrath; I can meet her without hatred. I will smile on her; I must love her or I am neither a Christian, a wife, nor a mother. If, as you say, I have helped to preserve your heart from the contact of what might have soiled it, the Englishwoman cannot hate me. A woman must love the mother of the man she loves; and I am your mother.

“What did I look for in your heart? The place left empty by Mme. de Vandenesse. Oh, yes; for you have always complained of my coldness! Yes, I am indeed no more than your mother. Forgive me for all I said to you when you arrived, for a mother ought to rejoice to know that her son is so much loved.”

She leaned her head on my bosom and repeated—

“Forgive, forgive!”

The accent of her voice was new to me. It was not her girlish voice with its gleeful intonation; nor her wifely voice with its imperative fall; nor the sighing of a grieving mother. It was a heart-rending voice, a new tone for new sorrows.

“As for you, Félix,” she went on, with more animation, “you are the friend who can do no wrong. You have lost nothing in my heart; do not blame yourself, feel not the slightest remorse. Was it not the height of selfishness to ask you to sacrifice to an impossible future the most stupendous pleasure, since a woman can abandon her children for its sake, abdicate her rank, and renounce eternity! How often have I seen you my superior! You were lofty and noble, I was mean and sinful!

“Well, well, all is said. I can never be anything to you but a far-away light, high up, sparkling, cold, but unchanging. Only, Félix, do not let me be alone in loving the brother I have chosen. Love me too. A sister’s love has no bitter morrow, no perverse moods. You need never be untrue to the indulgent soul that will live in your beautiful life, will never fail to weep over your sorrows, and be glad over your joys, that will love the women who make you happy,



and be indignant if you are betrayed. I have never had a brother to love so. Be magnanimous enough to cast off all pride, and solve all the difficulties of our attachment, hitherto so ill-defined and stormy, by this sweet and holy affection. I can still live on those terms. I will be the first to shake hands with Lady Dudley."

She shed no tears, alas, as she spoke these words full of bitter experience, while, by snatching away the last veil that hid her soul and her sufferings from me, they showed me by how many links she was bound to me, and what strong chains I had broken through.

We were in such a delirium of agitation that we did not observe that it was raining in torrents.

"Will Mme. la Comtesse take shelter here for a few minutes?" said the coachman, pointing to the principal inn of Ballan.

She nodded consent, and we sat for about half an hour under the archway of the entrance, to the great astonishment of the people of the inn, who wondered why Mme. de Mortsauif was driving about the country at eleven o'clock at night.

Was she going to Tours? Or on her way back?

When the storm was over, and the rain had settled into what is called in Touraine a *brouée*, a heavy mist which did not hinder the moon from silvering the upper strata as they were swept swiftly past by the higher currents of wind, the coachman went out and turned homewards, to my great joy.

"Go the way I told you," said the Countess gently.

So we took the road to the Landes de Charlemagne, and there the rain began again. Half-way across the sandy common I heard Lady Arabella's pet dog barking. A horse suddenly dashed out from under a clump of oaks, crossed the road at a bound, leaped the ditch made by the owners to show the boundary of each plot where the soil was considered worth cultivating, and Lady Dudley pulled up on the common to see the carriage pass.

"What joy thus to wait for one's child when it is not a sin!" said Henriette.

The dog's barking had told Lady Dudley that I was in the carriage; she thought, no doubt, that I had come to fetch her in it, in consequence of the bad weather. When we reached the spot where the Marchioness was waiting, she flew along the road with the skill in horsemanship for which she is noted, and which Henriette admired as a marvel. Arabella, by way of a pet name, called me only by the last syllable of *Amédée*, pronouncing it in the English fashion, and on her lips the cry had a charm worthy of a fairy. She knew that I alone should understand her when she called "My Dee."

"It is he, madame," answered the Countess, looking, in the clear moonlight, at the whimsical personage whose eager face was strangely framed in long locks out of curl.

You know how swiftly women take stock of each other. The Englishwoman recognized her rival, and was arrogantly English: she comprehended us in one flash of English scorn, and vanished on the heath with the rapidity of an arrow.

"Back to Clochegourde—fast," cried the Countess, to whom this ruthless glance was like an ax at her heart.

The coachman went back by the Chinon road, which was better than that by *Saché*. When the carriage was on the skirts of the common again we heard the mad gallop of Arabella's horse and her dog's footsteps. They were all three hurrying round the woods on the other side of the heath.

"She is going away; you have lost her forever!" said Henriette.

"Well," replied I, "let her go. She will not cost me a regret."

"Oh, poor woman!" cried the Countess, with compassionate horror. "But where is she going?"

"To *La Grenadière*, a little house near *Saint-Cyr*," said I.

"And she is going alone," said Henriette, in a tone which told me that all women make common cause in love, and never desert each other.

As we turned into the *Clochegourde* avenue, Arabella's dog barked gleefully and ran on in front of the carriage.

"She is here before us!" cried the Countess. Then, after a pause, she added: "I never saw a finer woman. What a

hand! What a figure! Her complexion shames the lily, and her eyes flash like diamonds. But she rides too well; she must love to exert her strength; I fancy she is energetic and violent; then, too, she seems to me too defiant of conventionality, a woman who recognizes no law is apt to listen only to her own caprice. Those who are so anxious to shine, to be always moving, have not the gift of constancy. To my notions love needs greater quietude; I picture it to myself as an immense lake where the sounding line finds no bottom, where the tempests may indeed be wild, but rare, and restricted within impassable bounds—where two beings dwell on an island of flowers, far from the world whose luxury and display would repel them.

“But love must take the stamp of character. I am perhaps mistaken. If the elements of nature yield to the mold impressed by climate, why should it not be so with the feelings of individuals? Feelings, which as a whole obey a general law, no doubt differ in expression only. Each soul has its own modes. The Marchioness is a powerful woman who traverses distances and acts with the vigor of a man; jailer, warders, and executioner must be killed to deliver her lover. Whereas certain women know no better than to love with all their soul; in danger they kneel down, pray, and die.

“Which of the two do you prefer? That is the whole question. Yes, the Marchioness loves you; she sacrifices so much for you! It is she perhaps who will love on when you have ceased to love her.”

“Permit me, dear angel, to echo the question you asked the other day: How do you know these things?”

“Each form of suffering brings its lesson, and I have suffered in so many ways that my knowledge is vast.”

My servant had heard the order given, and expecting that we should return by the terraces, he held my horse in readiness, in the avenue. Arabella's dog had scented the horse, and his mistress, led by very legitimate curiosity, had followed it through the wood where she, no doubt, had been lurking.

“Go and make your peace,” said Henriette, smiling, with

no trace of melancholy. "Tell her how much she is mistaken as to my intentions. I wanted to show her all the value of the prize that has fallen to her; my heart has none but kindly feelings towards her, above all, neither anger nor scorn. Explain to her that I am her sister, and not her rival."

"I will not go!" cried I.

"Have you never experienced," said she, with the flashing pride of a martyr, "that certain forms of consideration may be an insult. Go—go!"

I went to join Lady Dudley and find out what humor she was in. "If only she might be angry and throw me over," thought I, "I would return to Clochegourde."

The dog led me to an oak tree from whence the Marchioness flew off, shouting to me, "Away, away!"

I had no choice but to follow her to Saint-Cyr, which we reached at midnight.

"The lady is in excellent health," said Arabella, as she dismounted.

Only those who have known her can conceive of the sarcasm implied in this observation dryly flung at me in a tone that was meant to convey: "I should have died!"

"I forbid you to cast any of your three-barbed witticisms at Mme. de Mortsaufr," I replied.

"And does it offend Your Grace when I remark on the perfect health enjoyed by one so dear to your precious heart? Frenchwomen, it is said, hate even their lovers' dogs; but in England we love everything that is dear to our sovereign lord, we hate what they hate, for we live in their very skin. Allow me then to be as fond of that lady as you are. Only, dear boy," said she, throwing her arms round me, all wet from the rain, "if you were faithless to me, I should neither stand up, nor lie down, nor ride in a carriage with men-servants; neither drive through the Landes de Charlemagne, nor over the heaths of any country in the world, nor be in my bed, nor under the roof of my fathers. I should be no more.

"I was born in Lancashire, where women can die of love. To have owned you, and give you up? I will give you up

to no power in the world, not even to death, for I would go with you!"

She took me into her room, where comfort already made its presence felt.

"Love her, my dear," said I warmly, "for she loves you, and not ironically but sincerely."

"Sincerely, child?" she said, unfastening her riding-habit.

With a lover's vanity, I tried to make this arrogant creature understand the sublimity of Henriette's character. While the maid, who did not know a word of French, was dressing her hair, I tried to describe Mme. de Mortsauf, sketching her life, and repeating the generous thoughts suggested to her by a crisis in which all women are petty and spiteful. Though Arabella affected to pay not the slightest attention, she did not lose a word.

"I am delighted," said she when we were alone, "to know of your taste for this style of Christian conversation; there is on my estate a curate who has not his match in composing sermons, our laborers can understand them, so well is his prose adapted to his audience. I will write to-morrow to my father to dispatch this worthy by steamer, and you shall find him in Paris. When once you have heard him, you will never want to listen to anyone else, all the more so because he too enjoys perfect health. His moralizing will give you none of those shocks that end in tears; it flows without turmoil, like a limpid brook, and secures delightful slumbers. Every evening, if you like, you can satisfy your craving for sermons while digesting your dinner.

"English moralizing, my dear boy, is as superior to that of Tours as our cutlery, our plate, and our horses are superior to your knives and your animals. Do me the favor of hearing my curate—promise me. I am but a woman, my dearest; I know how to love, how to die for you, if you like; but I have not studied at Eton, nor at Oxford, nor at Edinburgh; I am neither Doctor nor Reverend; I cannot moralize for you, I am quite unfit for it, and should be to the last degree clumsy if I attempted it.

"I do not complain of your taste; you might have far more degraded tastes than this, and I would try to accommo-

date myself to them; for I intend that you should find with me everything you like best—the pleasures of love, the pleasures of the table, the pleasures of church-going—good claret and the Christian virtues. Would you like to see me in a hair-shirt this evening? That woman is happy indeed to be able to supply you with moralities! In what university do Frenchwomen take their degree? Poor me! I have nothing to give you but myself, I am only a slave——”

“Then why did you fly when I wanted to bring you together?”

“Are you mad, my Dee? I would travel from Paris to Rome disguised as your footman, I would do the most preposterous things for you; but how could I stop to talk on the highroad to a woman who has not been introduced to me, and who was ready with a sermon under three heads? I can talk to peasants. I would ask a workman to share his loaf with me if I were hungry, I would give him a few guineas, and it would be all in order; but as to stopping a chaise, as highwaymen do in England—that is not included in my code of honor.

“My poor boy, all you know is how to love; and you do not know how to live? Besides, my angel, I am not yet made exactly in your image. I have no taste for moralities. However, to please you, I am capable of the greatest efforts. Come, say no more, I will set to work, I will try to preach. I will never allow myself to caress you without throwing in a text from the Bible.”

She exerted all her power—used it, abused it, till she saw in my eyes the ardent look that always came into them when she began her enchantments. She triumphed completely, and I submissively agreed to set above the vain subtleties of the Catholic Church the magnanimity of the woman who wrecks herself, renounces all future hope, and makes love her sole virtue.

“Does she love herself better than she loves you?” said she. “Does she prefer to you something which is not you? How can a woman attach any importance to anything in herself beyond that with which you honor it? No woman, however great a moralist she may be, can be the equal of

a man. Walk over us, kill us, never let us encumber your life. Our part is to die, yours to live great and supreme. In your hand is the poniard; we have only to love and forgive. Does the sun care about the midges that live in his beams, by his glow? They exist as long as they can, and when he disappears they die——”

“Or fly away,” I put in.

“Or fly away,” she replied, with an indifference that would have spurred any man determined to use the strange power she attributed to us. “Do you think it worthy of a woman to stuff a man with bread buttered with virtue, to convince him that love and religion are incompatible? Am I then an infidel? A woman may yield or refuse; but to refuse and preach is to inflict a double penalty, which is against the law of every land. Now here you will have nothing but delicious sandwiches prepared by the hand of your humble servant Arabella, whose whole morality consists in inventing caresses such as no man has ever known, and which are suggested by the angels.”

I know nothing so undoing as such banter in the hands of an Englishwoman; she throws into it the eloquent gravity, the pompous air of conviction under which the English cover the lofty imbecilities of their prejudiced views. French irony is like lace with which women dress out the pleasure they give and the disputes they invent; it is a trimming, and as graceful as their dress. But English “fun” is an acid so corrosive to those on whom it falls that it leaves them skeletons, picked and cleaned. A witty Englishwoman’s tongue is like a tiger’s, which strips off the flesh to the very bone, and all in play; mockery, that all-powerful weapon of the Devil’s, leaves a deadly poison in the wounds it re-opens at will.

That night Arabella chose to exert her power like the Grand Turk, who, to show his skill, amuses himself with decapitating innocent persons.

“My angel,” said she, when she had soothed me to the dozing condition in which everything is forgotten but a sense of happiness, “I have been moralizing too—I myself! I was wondering whether I am committing a crime in loving you, whether I was violating divine laws, and I decided that

nothing could be more pious or more natural. Why should God create some beings more beautiful than others unless to show us that they are to be adored? The crime would be not to love you, for are you not an angel? That lady insults you by classing you with other men; the rules of morality do not apply to you; God has set you above them. Is not loving you rising to be nearer to Him? Can He be wroth with a poor woman for longing for things divine? Your large and radiant heart is so like the sky, that I mistake it, as midges come to burn themselves in the lights at a festival! Are they to be punished for their mistake? Indeed, is it a mistake? Is it not too fervent a worship of light? They perish from too much piety—if, indeed, flinging oneself into the arms we love can be called perishing?

“I am weak enough to love you while that woman is strong enough to remain in her chapel! Do not frown on me. You think I condemn her? No, child! I delight in her morality, since it has led her to leave you free, and so allowed me to win you and to keep you forever—for you are mine forever, are you not?”

“Yes.”

“Forever and ever?”

“Yes.”

“Then grant me a favor, my Sultan. I alone have discerned all your value. She, you say, cultivates the land? I leave that to the farmers; I would rather cultivate your heart.”

I have tried to recall all this chatter to give you a clear idea of this woman, to justify all I have said about her, and to give you a clew to the catastrophe. But how am I to describe the accompaniment to the sweet words you know so well—conceits only to be compared to the most extravagant fictions of our dreams; inventions sometimes reminding me of my nosebags: grace united to strength, tenderness and languid softness contrasting with volcanic eruptions and passions; the most elaborate modulations of music applied to the harmony of our delight, the most insinuating words graced with charming ideas, everything most poetical that



wit can add to the pleasures of sense. She aimed at destroying the impression left on my heart by Henriette's chaste reserve, by the flashes of her own impetuous passion. The Marchioness had seen the Countess quite as well as Mme. de Mortsauf had seen her. They had judged each other clearly. The elaborate attack planned by Arabella showed how great her fears had been, and her secret admiration for her rival.

In the morning I found her with eyes full of tears; she had not slept.

"What is the matter?" said I.

"I am afraid my excess of love may militate against me," said she. "I give you all; she, cleverer than I, still has something for you to desire. If you prefer her, think no more of me; I will not bore you with my sufferings, my remorse, my sorrows—no, I will go to die far away from you, like a plant far from the life-giving sun."

She extracted from me such protestations as filled her with joy. What is to be said to a woman who weeps in the morning? A hard word then seems brutal. If she has not been denied over night, we must need tell lies in the morning, for the code of man makes such falsehood a duty.

"Well, then I am happy," said she, wiping away her tears. "Go back to her; I do not wish to owe you to the vehemence of my love, but to your own free will. If you come back again I shall believe that you love me as much as I love you, which I had always thought impossible."

She managed to persuade me to return to Clochegourde. How false the situation in which I should then find myself, was not to be imagined by a man gorged with raptures. If I had refused to go to Clochegourde, Lady Arabella would have won the day at Henriette's expense. Arabella would then carry me off to Paris. Still, to go thither was to insult Mme. de Mortsauf. In that case I should come back more certainly than ever to Arabella.

Has any woman forgiveness for such crimes of treason? Short of being an angel come down from heaven rather than a purified spirit about to attain to it, a loving woman would see her lover suffer any agony sooner than see him made

happy by another. The more she loves, the more she will be hurt.

Thus regarded from both sides, my position, when I had once left Clochegourde to go to La Grenadière, was as fatal to my first true love as it was profitable to my chance passion. The Marchioness had foreseen it all with deep calculation. She confessed later that if Mme. de Mortsauf had not met her on the heath she had intended to commit me by hanging about Clochegourde.

The instant I saw the Countess, whom I found pale and stricken, like a person who has endured intolerable insomnia, I exercised—not the tact—but the instinct which enables a still young and generous heart to appreciate the full bearing of actions that are criminal in the jurisprudence of noble souls though indifferent in the eyes of the vulgar. Suddenly, as a child that has gone down a steep while playing and plucking flowers, sees, in terror, that he cannot go up it again, discerns no human ground but at an immeasurable distance, feels himself alone in the dark, and hears savage howls, I perceived that a whole world lay between us. A loud cry went up in our souls, an echo, as it were, of the funeral *Consummatum est* which is pronounced in church on Good Friday, at the hour when the Saviour died—a dreadful scene which freezes those young souls in which religion is their first love. Every illusion Henriette had known had died under one blow; her heart had gone through its passion. She whom pleasure had never involved in its deadening coils—could she suspect the joys of happy lovers, that she refused to look at me? for she would not shed on my gaze the light which for six years had irradiated my life. She knew, then, that the source of the beams that shone from our eyes lay in our souls, for which they were as a pathway, leading from one to the other, so that they might visit, become one, separate, and play—like two confiding girls who have no secrets from each other. I was bitterly conscious of the sin of bringing under this roof, where caresses were unknown, a face on which the wings of enjoyment had shed their sparkling dust.

If, the day before, I had left Lady Dudley to go home alone; if I had come back to Clochegourde, where Henriette perhaps expected me; perhaps—well, perhaps Mme. de Mortsauf would not have behaved so strictly as my sister. She gave all her civilities the solemnity of exaggerated emphasis; she played her part to excess so as not to forget it. During breakfast she paid me a thousand little attentions, humiliating attentions; she made much of me like a sick man to be pitied.

“You were out betimes,” said the Count; “you must have a fine appetite, you whose digestion is not ruined.”

This speech, which failed to bring the smile of a wily sister to the Countess’s lips, put the crowning touch to the impossibility of my position. I could not be at Clochegourde by day and at Saint-Cyr by night. Arabella had counted on my sense of delicacy and Mme. de Mortsauf’s magnanimity.

All through that long day I felt the difficulty of becoming the friend of a woman one has long desired. This transition, simple enough when years have led up to it, in youth is a distemper. I was ashamed, I cursed all pleasure, I wished that Mme. de Mortsauf would demand my blood! I could not tear her rival to pieces before her eyes; she avoided mentioning her, and to speak ill of Arabella was a baseness which would have incurred the contempt of Henriette, herself noble and lofty to the inmost core. After five years of exquisite intimacy we did not know what to talk about; our words did not express our thoughts; we hid gnawing pangs, we to whom suffering had hitherto been a faithful interpreter. Henriette affected a cheerful air on my behalf and her own; but she was sad. Though she called herself my sister on every opportunity, and though she was a woman, she could find no subject to keep up the conversation, and we sat for the most part in awkward silence. She added to my mental torment by affecting to think herself Lady Arabella’s only victim.

“I am suffering more than you are,” said I, at a moment when the sister spoke in a tone of very feminine irony.

"How can that be?" said she, in the haughty voice a woman can put on when her feelings are underestimated.

"I have done all the wrong."

Then there was a moment when the Countess assumed a cold indifference that was too much for me. I determined to go.

That evening, on the terrace, I took leave of all the family together. They followed me to the lawn where my horse waited, pawing the ground. They stood out of the way. When I had taken the bridle, the Countess came up to me.

"Come, we will walk down the avenue alone," said she.

I gave her my arm, and we went out through the court-yards, walking slowly as if lingering over the sensation of moving together; we thus reached a clump of trees that screened a corner of the outer enclosure.

"Good-by, my friend," said she, stopping and throwing her arms round my neck with her head on my heart. "Good-by, we shall see each other no more. God has given me the melancholy power of looking into the future. Do you remember the panic that came over me that day when you came back so handsome, so youthful; and when I saw you turn to quit me, just as to-day you are leaving Clochegourde for La Grenadière? Well, last night I was once more enabled to look forward to our destinies. My friend, we are speaking to each other for the last time. I can hardly say a few words to you even now, for not all of me speaks; death has already stricken something within me. You will have robbed my children of their mother—take her place! You can! Jacques and Madeleine love you already as though you had made them suffer!"

"Die!" cried I in alarm, as I looked at the dry flame in her glittering eyes, of which I can only give an idea to those whose dear ones have never been attacked by the dreadful malady by comparing her eyes with balls of tarnished silver. "Die! Henriette, I command you to live. You used to require vows of me—now I, to-day, require one of you: swear to me that you will consult Origet and do exactly what he tells you."

"Then would you contend against the loving mercy of God?" said she, interrupting me with a cry of despair, indignant at being misunderstood.

"Then you do not love me enough to obey me blindly in everything, as that miserable lady does?"

"Yes, yes; whatever you wish," said she, urged by a jealousy which made her overleap in that instant the distance she had till now preserved.

"I stay here," said I, kissing her eyes.

Startled by this capitulation she escaped from my embrace and went to lean against a tree. Then she turned homewards, walking very fast without turning her head; I followed her, she was praying and weeping. When we reached the lawn I took her hand and kissed it respectfully. This unlooked-for surrender touched her heart.

"Yours, come what may," said I. "I love you as your aunt loved you."

She started and wrung my hand.

"One look," said I, "only one of your old looks!" And feeling my whole soul enlightened by the flashing glance she gave me, I cried, "The woman who gives herself wholly gives me less of life and spirit than I have now received! Henriette, you are the best beloved—the only love."

"I will live," said she, "but you too must get well."

That gaze had effaced the impression of Arabella's sarcasms. Thus was I the plaything of the two irreconcilable passions I have described to you, and of which I felt the alternating influence. I loved an angel and a demon: two women equally lovely; one graced with all the virtues we torture out of hatred of our own defects, the other with all the vices we deify out of selfishness. As I rode down the avenue, turning round again and again to see Mme. de Mortsauf leaning against a tree, her children standing by her and waving their handkerchiefs, I detected in my soul an impulse of pride at knowing myself to be the arbiter of two such noble destinies, the glory, on such different grounds, of two superior women, and at having inspired such passions that either of them would die if I failed her.

This brief but fatuous dream was severely punished, believe me. Some demon prompted me to wait with Arabella till a fit of despair or the Count's death should throw Henriette into my arms, since Henriette still loved me: her severity, her tears, her remorse, her Christian resignation, were the eloquent symptoms of a feeling which could no more be effaced from her heart than from my own. As I slowly walked my horse along the pretty avenue, making these reflections, I was not five-and-twenty, I was fifty. Does not a young man, even more than a woman, leap in a moment from thirty to sixty?

Though I could drive away these evil thoughts with a breath, they haunted me, I must confess. Their source, perhaps, was at the Tuileries behind the panels of the royal cabinet. Who could come unharmed under the tainting influence of Louis XVIII., who was wont to say that a man knows nothing of true passion till he is past maturity, since passion is never splendid and frenzied till there is some loss of power, and each pleasure is like the gambler's last stake.

When I reached the end of the avenue I looked round once more, and in the twinkling of an eye I was back again, on seeing Henriette still standing there alone. I flew to bid her a last adieu, bathed in tears of expiation of which she knew not the secret. Sincere tears, shed, though I knew it not, on the sweet love that was forever past, on the virgin emotions, the flowers of life that can never bloom again. Later in life a man can no longer give, he only receives; what he loves in his mistress is himself; whereas in youth he loves her in himself. Later, he inoculates the woman who loves him, with his tastes, perhaps with his vices; whereas, in the early days, the woman he loves imparts her virtues, her refinement, invites him to what is beautiful by her smile, and shows him what devotion means by her example.

Alas for the man who has not had his Henriette! Alas for him who has not met a Lady Dudley! If he marries, the second will fail to retain his wife, the first may perhaps be deserted by his mistress; happy is he who finds both in one woman; happy, Natalie, is the man you love!

On our return to Paris Arabella and I became more intimate; by small degrees we insensibly abrogated the laws of propriety to which I had subjected myself—laws whose observance often leads the world to overlook the false position to which Lady Dudley had committed herself. The world, which dearly loves to get behind the curtain of things, accepts them as soon as it knows the hidden secret. Lovers who are obliged to live in the world of fashion are always wrong to break down the barriers insisted on by the common law of drawing-rooms, wrong not to obey implicitly all the conventions demanded by good manners; more for their own sake than for that of others. Distances to be traversed, superficial respect to be maintained, comedies to be played out, mystery to be kept up—all the strategy of a happy love affair fills up life, revives desire, and preserves the heart from the lassitude of habit. But a first passion, like a young man, is by nature profligate, and cuts down its timber recklessly, instead of economizing its resources.

Arabella scorned such commonplace ideas, and submitted to them only to please me. Like the destroyer who marks his prey beforehand to secure it, she hoped to compromise me in the eyes of all Paris so as to attach me to her permanently. She displayed every coquettish art to keep me at the house, for she was not satisfied with the elegant scandal which, for lack of evidence, countenanced nothing more than whisperings behind a fan. Seeing her so anxious to commit an imprudence which must definitely certify her position, how could I do otherwise than believe in her love?

Once involved in the beguilements of an illicit union I fell, a prey to despair, for I saw my life cut out in antagonism to received ideas and to Henriette's injunctions. I lived, then, in the sort of frenzy which comes over a consumptive man, when, conscious of his approaching end, he will not allow his breathing to be sounded. There was one corner of my heart I could not look into without anguish; a spirit of vengeance was constantly suggesting ideas on which I dared not dwell.

My letters to Henriette painted this mental disorder, and caused her infinite pain.

"At the cost of so much lost treasure she had hoped I should at least be happy," said she, in the only reply I ever received.

And I was not happy! Dear Natalie, happiness can only be positive; it cannot endure comparisons. My first ardor expended, I could not help comparing these two women, a contrast I had not yet been capable of studying. In fact, any great passion lies so heavily on our whole nature, that, in the first instance, it levels all angles and fills up the ruts of habit which represent our good or evil qualities. But later, in lovers who are thoroughly accustomed to each other, the features of their moral physiognomy reappear; they judge each other calmly, and not unfrequently in the course of this reaction of character on passion, antipathies are discovered which lead to the separations regarded by superficial minds as evidence of the inconstancy of the human heart.

This stage had begun for us. Less dazzled by her fascinations, and taking my pleasure retail, so to speak, I, half involuntarily perhaps, took stock of Lady Dudley to her disadvantage.

In the first place, I found her lacking in the mother-wit which distinguishes the Frenchwoman from all others, and makes her the most delightful to love, as men have owned who have had opportunities for judging of the women of many lands. When a Frenchwoman loves she is metamorphosed; her much talked of vanity is devoted to beautifying her love; she sacrifices her dangerous conceit and throws all her pretentiousness into the art of loving. She weds her lover's interests, his hatreds, his friendships; in one day she masters the experienced shrewdness of a man of business; she studies the law, she understands the machinery of credit and can seduce a banker's counting-house; reckless and prodigal, she will not make a single blunder or waste a single louis. She is at once mother, housekeeper, and physician, and to every fresh phase she gives a grace of delight that betrays infinite love in the most trifling details. She combines the special qualities which charm us in the women of various countries, giving unity to the compound by wit, the growth



of France, which vivifies, sanctions, and justifies everything, lends variety, and redeems the monotony of a sentiment based on the present tense of a single verb.

The Frenchwoman loves once for all, without pause or fatigue, at all hours, in public or alone; in public she finds a tone that argues to one ear only, her very silence speaks, and her eyes appeal to you without looking up; if speech and looks are alike prohibited she can use the sand under her feet to trace a thought in; alone she expresses her passion even in her sleep; in short, she bends the world to her love.

The Englishwoman, on the contrary, bends her love to the world. Accustomed by education to preserve the icy manners, the egotistic British mien of which I have told you, she opens and shuts her heart with the readiness of English-made machinery. She has an impenetrable mask which she takes on and off with phlegmatic coolness; as impassioned as an Italian when no eyes can see, she turns coldly dignified as soon as the world looks on. Then the man she loves best on earth doubts his power as he meets the utterly passive countenance, the calm intonation, the perfect freedom of expression that an Englishwoman assumes as she comes out of her boudoir. At such a moment dissimulation becomes indifference; the Englishwoman has forgotten everything. Certainly, a woman who can throw off her love like a garment makes one think that she may change.

What storms toss the surges of the heart when they are stirred by wounded self-love, as we see a woman taking up her love, laying it down and returning to it, like a piece of needlework! Such women are too thoroughly mistresses of themselves to be wholly yours; they allow the world too much influence for your sovereignty to be undivided. In cases when a Frenchwoman comforts the sufferer by a look, or betrays her annoyance at intrusion by some lively jest, the Englishwoman's silence is complete: it frets the soul and irritates the brain. These women are so accustomed to reign wherever they may be, that, to most of them, the omnipotence of fashion dominates even their pleasures.

Those who are excessive in prudery should be excessive in love; Englishwomen are so; they throw everything into

form, but the love of form does not, in them, produce a feeling for art; they may say what they will, Protestantism and Catholicism account for the differences which give to a Frenchwoman's spirit so great a superiority over the reasoned, calculating love of Englishwomen. Protestantism is skeptical, it examines and kills belief; it is the death of art and of love. Where the world rules the people of the world must obey; but those who knew what passion means, flee away; to them it is intolerable.

You may understand, then, how much my self-respect was wounded by discovering that Lady Dudley would not live without the world, and that these British transitions were habitual with her. They were not a necessity imposed on her by the world; no, she naturally showed herself under two aspects adverse to each other; when she loved it was with intoxication; no woman of any nationality could be compared with her, she was as good as a whole seraglio; but then a curtain fell on this fairy display, and shut out even the remembrance of it. She would respond neither to a look nor a smile; she was neither mistress nor slave; she behaved like an ambassadress compelled to be precise in her phrases and demeanor, she put me out of patience with her calmness, outraged my heart by her primness; she thus stored up her love till it was required, instead of raising it to the ideal by enthusiasm. In which of the two women was I to believe?

I felt by a myriad pin-pricks the infinite difference that divided Henriette from Arabella. When Mme. de Mortsauf left me for a few minutes she seemed to charge the air with the care of speaking of her; as she went away the sweep of her gown appealed to my eyes, as its rippling rustle came to my ear when she came back; there was infinite tenderness in the way her eyelids unfolded when she looked down; her voice, her musical voice, was a continual caress; her speech bore witness to an ever-present thought; she was always the same. She did not divide her soul between two atmospheres, one burning and the other icy; in short, Mme. de Mortsauf kept her wit and the bloom of her intelligence to express her feelings, she made herself fascinating to her

children and to me by the ideas she uttered. Arabella's wit did not serve her to make life pleasant, she did not exert it for my benefit, it existed only by and for the world; it was purely satirical, she loved to rend and bite, not for the fun of it, but to gratify a craving. Mme. de Mortsauif would have hidden her happiness from every eye; Lady Arabella wanted to show hers to all Paris, and yet with horrible dissimulation she maintained the proprieties even while riding with me in the Bois de Boulogne.

This mixture of ostentation and dignity, of love and coldness, was constantly chafing my soul that was at once virgin and impassioned, and as I was incapable of thus rushing from one mood to another my temper suffered; I was throbbing with love when she relapsed into conventional prudery. When I ventured to complain, not without the greatest deference, she turned her three-barbed tongue on me, mingling the rhodomontade of adoration with the English wit I tried to describe. As soon as she found herself in antagonism to me she made a sport of wounding my heart, and humiliating my mind, and molded me like dough. To my remarks as to a medium to be observed in all things, she retorted by caricaturing my ideas, and carrying them to extremes. If I reproached her for her conduct, she would ask me if I wanted her to embrace me under the eyes of all Paris—at the Italian opera—and she took the matter so seriously that I, knowing her mania for making herself talked about, quaked lest she should fulfill her words.

In spite of her real passion, I never felt in her anything sacred, reserved, and deep, as in Henriette; she was as insatiable as a sandy soil. Mme. de Mortsauif was always composed; she felt my soul in an accent or a glance, while the Marchioness was never overpowered by a look, by a pressure of the hand, or a murmured word. Nay, more, the happiness of yesterday was as nothing on the morrow. No proof of love ever surprised her; she had such a craving for excitement, turmoil, and show, that nothing, I imagine, came up to her ideal in these points; hence her frenzied excesses of passion; it was for her own sake, not for mine, that she indulged her extravagant fancies.

Mme. de Mortsau's letter, the beacon that still shone on my path, and showed how the most virtuous wife can obey her genius as a Frenchwoman by proving her perpetual vigilance, her unfailing comprehension of all my vicissitudes—that letter must have enlightened you as to the care with which Henriette kept watch over my material interests, my political connections, my moral conquests, and her intimate interest in my life in all permitted ways.

On all these points Lady Dudley affected the reserve of a mere acquaintance. She never inquired as to my doings, nor my aversions or friendships with men. Lavish for herself, without being generous, she decidedly made too little distinction between interest and love; whereas, without having tested her, I knew that, to spare me a regret, Henriette would have found for me what she would never have sought for herself. In one of those catastrophes which may befall the highest and the wealthiest—history has many instances—I should have taken counsel of Henriette, but I would have been dragged to prison rather than say a word to Lady Dudley.

So far the contrast is based on feelings, but it was equally great with regard to externals. In France luxury is the expression of the man, the reproduction of his ideas, of his personal poetry; it represents the character, and, between lovers, gives value to the most trifling attentions by drawing out the ruling ideas of the one we love; but English luxury, which had bewitched me by its selectness and refinement, was as mechanical as the rest. Lady Dudley infused nothing of herself into it; it was the work of her servants—bought, paid for. The thousand comforting attentions at Cloche-gourde were in Arabella's eyes the concern of the servants; each had his duty and special function. The choice of good footmen was her steward's business, just as if they were horses. This woman felt no attachment to those about her; the death of the best of them would not have affected her; another, equally well trained, was to be had for money. As to her fellows, I never saw a tear in her eye for the woes of others; indeed, there was a frank selfishness about her which it was impossible not to laugh at.

The crimson robe of a great lady covered this iron soul. The exquisite *almée* who, in the evening, lounged on her rugs and rang all the tinkling bells of amorous folly, could quickly reconcile a young man to the hard and unfeeling English-woman; indeed, it was only step by step that I discerned the volcanic rock on which I was wasting my labors, since it could never yield a harvest.

Mme. de Mortsau had read this nature at a glance in their brief meeting; I remembered her prophetic words. Henriette was right throughout: Arabella's love was becoming intolerable. I have since noticed that women who ride well are never tender; like the Amazons they have lost a breast, and their hearts are petrified in one spot, I know not which.

Just when I was beginning to feel the weight of this yoke, when weariness was stealing over me, body and soul, when I understood how great a sanctity true feeling can give to love, and when the memories of Clochegourde were too much for me as, in spite of the distance, I smelt the perfume of its roses, heard the song of its nightingales—at the moment when I first perceived the stony bed of the torrent under its diminished flood, I had a blow which still echoes in my life, for it is repeated every hour.

I was writing in the King's private room; he was to go out at four o'clock; the Duc de Lenoncourt was in waiting. As he came into the room the King asked for news of the Countess. I looked up hastily with a too significant gesture, and the King, startled by my eagerness, gave me the look which commonly introduced the stern words he could speak on occasion.

"Sir, my poor daughter is dying," replied the Duke.

"Will Your Majesty condescend to grant me leave of absence?" said I, with tears in my eyes, and risking an outburst of wrath.

"Fly, *my lord!*" replied he, smiling at the irony he had infused into the words, and letting me off a reprimand in honor of his own wit.

The Duke, more a courtier than a father, asked for no

leave, but got into the carriage with the King. I went off, without saying good-by to Lady Dudley, who by good luck was not at home, and for whom I left a note saying that I was called away on the King's service. At La Croix de Berny I met His Majesty returning from Verrières. As he accepted a bouquet which he dropped at his feet, the King gave me a look full of the royal irony that is so crushingly piercing, and which was as much as to say: "If you mean to become a somebody in political life, come back. Do not amuse yourself with interviewing the dead!"

The Duke waved me a melancholy signal with his hand.

The two gorgeous coaches, drawn by eight horses, the Colonels in gold lace, the mounted escort, and the clouds of dust whirled swiftly past to cries of "Vive le roi!" And to me it was as though the Court had trampled the body of Mme. de Mortsauf under foot, with the indifference of nature herself to human disaster. Though he was an excellent good fellow, the Duke, I make no doubt, went off to play whist with monsieur after the King had retired. As to the Duchess, it was she, and she alone, who long since had dealt her daughter the first death-blow by telling her about Lady Dudley.

My hasty journey was like a dream, but it was the dream of the ruined gambler; I was in despair at having had no news. Had her confessor carried severity to the point of forbidding my entering Clochegourde? I accused Madeleine, Jacques, the Abbé de Dominis, everybody, even to M. de Mortsauf.

After passing Tours, as I turned off to the bridges of Saint-Sauveur, to go down the road that leads to Poncher between poplars—those poplars I had admired when I set out in search of my unknown fair—I met M. Origet. He guessed that I was going to Clochegourde, I guessed that he was coming from it; we stopped our chaises and got out, I to ask news and he to give it.

"Well," said I, "how is Mme. de Mortsauf?"

"I doubt if you will find her alive," said he. "She is enduring a terrible death from inanition. When she sent for me, in the month of June last, no medical power could

control the malady; she had all the symptoms which M. de Mortsauf must have described to you, since he fancied he was suffering from them. The Countess was no longer at the stage of a transient attack due to an internal disorder which medicine can deal with, and which may lead to an improved condition, nor was she suffering from a beginning of acute illness which may be cured in time; her disease had already reached a point at which our art is useless; it is the incurable result of some sorrow, as a mortal wound is the result of a poniard thrust. The malady is produced by the torpor of an organ as indispensable to life as the action of the heart. Grief had done the work of the dagger. Be under no mistake. What Mme. de Mortsauf is dying of is some unconfessed sorrow."

"Unconfessed?" said I. "Her children have not been ill?"

"No," said he, looking at me with meaning. "And since she has been so seriously ill, M. de Mortsauf has left her in peace.—I can be of no further use; M. Deslandes from Azazy can do everything. There is no remedy, and her sufferings are terrible. Rich, young, handsome—and she is dying aged and pinched by hunger, for she will die of starvation. For the last forty days the stomach is closed as it were, and rejects every kind of food in whatever form it is given."

M. Origet pressed the hand I offered him; he had almost asked for it, by a respectful movement.

"Courage, monsieur," said he, raising his eyes to Heaven.

The words expressed compassion for the sorrow he supposed me to share equally with him; he had no suspicion of the poisoned dart they bore, like an arrow piercing my heart. I hastily got into my carriage again, promising the postilion a handsome reward if he made good haste.

In spite of my impatience, I fancied I had made the journey in only a few minutes, so much was I absorbed by the bitter reflections that crowded on my soul. "She is dying of grief—and yet her children are well! then I am the cause of her death!" My threatening conscience underwent one of those examinations which echo through life,

and sometimes beyond it. How feeble, how impotent is human justice! It punishes none but visible crimes. Why death and disgrace to the assassin who kills with a single blow, who generally comes upon you in your sleep and leaves you to sleep forever, or who strikes you unexpectedly and spares you the agony of death? Why a happy life and the world's respect for the murderer who pours venom drop by drop into the soul and undermines the body to destroy it? How many assassins go unpunished! What deference for superior lives! What an acquittal for the homicide caused by moral persecution!

Some unknown and avenging hand suddenly lifted the painted curtain that veils society. I saw a number of such victims, as well known to you as to me.—Mme. de Beauséant, who had set out, dying, for Normandy a few days before my departure; the Duchesse de Langeais compromised! Lady Brandon gone to Touraine to die in the humble dwelling where Lady Dudley had just spent a fortnight—killed—by what terrible disaster you know. Our age is full of events of the kind. Who does not know the story of the poor young wife who poisoned herself, overcome by such jealousy as perhaps was killing Mme. de Mortsauf? Who has not shuddered at the fate of the charming girl dying, like a flower cankered by a gad-fly, after two years of married life, the victim of her guileless ignorance, the victim of a wretch with whom Ronquerolles, Montriveau, and de Marsay shake hands because he helps them in their political schemes? Has not Mme. d'Aiglemont been on the verge of the grave? Would she be alive now but for my brother's care?

Science is the world's accomplice in these crimes, for which there is no tribunal. No one, it would seem, ever dies of grief, or despair, or love, or hidden poverty, or hopes fruitlessly cherished, perpetually uprooted and replanted! The new nomenclature has ingenious words that account for everything: gastritis, pericarditis, the thousand feminine ailments of which the names are spoken in a whisper, are mere passports to the coffin on which hypocritical tears are shed, to be soon wiped away by the lawyer.



Is there behind all this woe some law of which we know nothing? Must the man who lives to a hundred ruthlessly strew the ground with the dead and see everything destroyed that he may live, just as the millionaire absorbs the efforts of a thousand minor industries? Is there a strong and venomous type of life which is fed on these sweet and gentle creatures? Good God! Was I then one of that race of tigers? Remorse clawed at my heart with burning fingers, and tears ran down my cheeks as I turned into the avenue to Clochegourde, on a damp October morning that brought the dead leaves down from the poplars planted under Henriette's directions—that avenue where I had seen her wave her handkerchief as though to call me back.

Was she still alive? Might I yet feel her two white hands laid on my prostrate head? In that moment I paid the price of every pleasure Arabella had given me, and I thought them dearly bought! I swore never to see her again, and took an aversion for England. Though Lady Dudley is a distinct variety of the species, I involved every Englishwoman in the black cerecloth of my condemnation.

On entering the grounds I had another shock. I found Madeleine, Jacques, and the Abbé de Dominis all kneeling at the foot of a wooden cross that stood on the corner of a plot of ground which had been included in the park at the time when the gate was erected. Neither the Count nor the Countess had wished to remove it. I sprang out of the chaise, went up to them bathed in tears, my heart wrung at the sight of these two young things and the solemn priest beseeching God. The old huntsman was there too, standing bareheaded a few paces away.

"Well, monsieur?" said I to the Abbé as I kissed Madeleine and Jacques on the brow; but they gave me a cold glance and did not interrupt their prayers.

The Abbé rose, I took his arm to lean on him, asking him: "Is she still living?" He bent his head mildly and sadly.

"Speak, I entreat you, in the name of Our Savior's Passion! Why are you praying at the foot of this cross? Why are you here and not with her? Why are the children

out in this cold morning? Tell me everything, that I may not blunder fatally in my ignorance."

"For some days past Mme. la Comtesse will only see her children at fixed hours.—Monsieur," he went on after a pause, "you may perhaps have to wait some hours before you can see Mme. de Mortsauf: she is terribly altered! But it will be well to prepare her for the interview; you might cause her some increase of suffering—as to death, it would be a mercy!"

I pressed the holy man's hand; his look and voice touched a wound without reopening it.

"We are all praying for her here," he went on, "for she, so saintly, so resigned, so fit to die, has for the last few days had a secret horror of death; she looks at us who are full of life with eyes in which, for the first time, there is an expression of gloom and envy. Her delusions are, I think, not so much the result of a fear of dying as of a sort of inward intoxication—the faded flowers of her youth rotting as they wither. Yes, the angel of evil is struggling with Heaven for that beautiful soul. Madame is going through her agony in the garden; her tears mingle with the white roses that crowned her head as a daughter of Jephtha, though married, and that have fallen one by one.

"Wait a little while; do not let her see you yet; you will bring in the glitter of the Court, she will see in your face a reflection of worldly enjoyments, and you will add to her regrets. Have pity on a weakness which God Himself forgave to His Son made man. Though what merit indeed should we have in triumphing where there was no adversary? Allow us, her director and myself, two old men whose ruins cannot offend her sight, to prepare her for this unlooked-for interview, and emotions which the Abbé Birotteau had desired her to forego. But there is in the things of this world an invisible warp of celestial causation which a religious eye can discern, and, since you have come here, you have perhaps been guided by one of the stars which shine in the moral sphere and lead to the tomb as they did to the manger."

And then he told me, with the unctuous eloquence that falls on the spirit like dew, that for the last six months

the Countess's sufferings had increased every day, in spite of all Orliget could do for her. The doctor had come to Clochegourde every evening for two months, striving to snatch this prey from death, for the Countess had said to him: "Save me!"

"But to cure the body the heart must be cured!" the old physician had one day exclaimed.

"As the malady increased the gentle creature's words became bitter," the Abbé de Dominis went on. "She cries out to earth to keep her, rather than to God to take her; then she repents of murmuring against the decrees of the Most High. These alternations rend her heart, and make the conflict terrible between body and soul. Often it is the body that conquers.

"'You have cost me dear!', she said one day to Madeleine and Jacques, sending them away from her bedside. But in the next breath, called back to God by seeing me, she spoke these angelic words to Mlle. Madeleine: 'The happiness of others becomes the joy of those who can no longer be happy.' And her accent was so pathetic that I felt my own eyes moisten. She falls indeed, but each time she rises again nearer to heaven."

Struck by the successive messages sent to me by fate, all leading up, in this vast concert of woe, through mournful modulations, to the funereal *thema*, the great cry of dying love, I exclaimed—

"Then you do believe that this beautiful lily, cut off in its prime, will bloom again in heaven?"

"You left her as a flower," he replied, "but you will find her burnt, purified in the fire of sorrow, as pure as a diamond still lying hidden in rubbish. Yes, that brilliant spirit, that angelical star, will emerge glorified from the clouds about it, to pass into the realms of light."

Just as I pressed the hand of this apostolic man, my heart overpowered with gratitude, the Count's perfectly white head was seen outside the house, and he flew to meet me with a gesture of great surprise.

"She was right! Here he is. 'Félix, Félix, Félix!—Félix is come!' Mme. de Mortsauf cried out.—My dear

fellow," he added, with looks distraught by terror, "death is here. Why did it not take an old lunatic like me, whom it had already laid hands on?"

I walked on to the house, summoning all my courage; but on the threshold of the long corridor through the house, from the lawn to the terrace steps, I was met by the Abbé Birotteau.

"Mme. la Comtesse begs you will not go to her yet," said he.

Looking round me I saw the servants coming and going, all very busy, dizzy with grief, and evidently startled by the orders delivered to them through Manette.

"What is the matter?" said the Count, irritated by this bustle, not only from a dread of the terrible end, but as a consequence of his naturally petulant temper.

"A sick woman's caprice," replied the Abbé. "Mme. la Comtesse does not choose to receive M. le Victome in the state she is in. She talks of dressing.—Why contradict her?"

Manette went to call Madeleine, and a few minutes later we saw her come out again from her mother's room. As we walked, all five of us—Jacques and his father, the two Abbés and I—in perfect silence along the front to the lawn, we went beyond the house. I looked by turns at Montbazon and at Azay, contemplating the yellowing valley, in mourning as it seemed, and responding, as it ever did, to the feelings that agitated me.

I suddenly saw the dear "Mignonne" running to seek autumn flowers, gathering them to compose a nosegay, no doubt; and thinking of all that was conveyed by this reflection of my loving attentions, a strange, indescribable sensation came over me, I tottered, my eyes grew dim, and the two priests between whom I was walking carried me to the low parapet of a terrace where I sat for some time, broken as it were, but without entirely losing consciousness.

"Poor Félix!" said the Count. "She said you were not to be written to; she knows how much you love her!"

Though prepared to suffer, I had found myself too weak to

bear a contemplation which summed up all my happy memories. "There," thought I to myself, "there lies the heath, as dry as skeleton, in the gray daylight, and in the midst of it there used to be one lonely flowering shrub which, in my walks of old, I could never admire without a shudder of ill-omen, for it was the emblem of this dreadful day!"

Everything was dejected about the little mansion, formerly so lively, so busy. Everything mourned, everything spoke of despair and neglect. The paths were but half raked, work begun had been left unfinished, the laborers stood idle gazing at the house. Though the vintage was being gathered, there was no noise, no chatter of tongues. The vineyards seemed deserted, so profound was the silence.

We walked on, grief repressing commonplace words, but listening to the Count, the only one of us who could talk. Having said the things which his mechanical affection for his wife dictated, from sheer habit and tendency of mind, he began finding fault with the Countess. His wife had never chosen to take any care of herself nor to listen when he gave her good counsel; he had discerned the first symptoms of her illness, for he had studied them in himself, he had physicked and cured himself with no aid but that of a strictly regulated diet and the avoidance of any strong emotion. He could perfectly well have cured the Countess, but a husband cannot take on himself such a responsibility, especially when he is so unhappy as to find his experience treated with contempt. In spite of all he could say, the Countess had called in Origet for her adviser—Origet, who had so mismanaged him, and was killing his wife! If the cause of this disease was excess of troubles, he certainly had been in a condition to develop it, but what troubles could his wife have had? The Countess was quite happy, she had nothing to grieve or annoy her. Their fortune was assured, thanks to his care and his good management; he allowed Mme. de Mortsauf to reign supreme at Clochegourde; their children—well brought up, and in good health—caused them no further anxiety; what then could have brought on the malady?

And he mixed up the expression of his despair with the

silliest accusations. Then, presently, recalled by some reminiscence of the admiration the noble creature deserved, tears started to his eyes so long since dried up.

Madeleine came to tell me that her mother was ready to see me. The Abbé Birotteau came with me. The grave little girl remained with her father, saying that her mother wished to see me alone, making it her excuse that the presence of several persons was too fatiguing. The solemnity of the moment gave me that strange sense of being hot within and cold on the surface that is so overwhelming on some great occasions in life. The Abbé Birotteau, one of the men whom God has marked for His own by clothing them in gentleness and simplicity, and endowing them with patience and mercy, drew me aside.

"Monsieur," he said, "you must know that I have done all that was humanly possible to hinder this meeting between you. The salvation of that saint required it. I thought only of her, not of you. Now that you are going once more to see her, whose door ought to be held against you by angels, I must inform you that I intend to be present to protect her against you, and perhaps against herself! Respect her feeble state. I ask you to be merciful, not as a priest, but as a humble friend of whom you knew not, and who would fain save you from remorse.

"Our poor invalid is dying literally of hunger and thirst. Since the morning she has been suffering from the feverish irritability that precedes that dreadful end, and I cannot tell you how sorely she regrets leaving life. The outcries of her rebellious flesh are buried in my heart where they wound still tender echoes; but M. de Dominis and I have assumed this religious duty so as to conceal the spectacle of her mental agony from the noble family which has lost its morning and its evening star. For her husband, her children, her servants, all ask, 'Where is *she*?' so greatly is she changed.

"When she sees you her laments will begin afresh. Put from you the thoughts of the man of the world, forget all the vanities of the heart, be to her the advocate of Heaven

and not of the world. Do not suffer that saint to die in a moment of doubt, her last accents words of despair!"

I made no reply. My silence filled the poor priest with consternation. I saw, I heard, I walked, and yet I was no longer on the earth. The one thought, "What can have happened? In what state shall I find her that everybody takes such elaborate precautions?" gave rise to apprehensions all the more torturing because they were undefined. That thought summed up every possible sorrow.

We reached the door of her room, and the anxious priest opened it. I then saw Henriette, dressed in white, reclining on her little sofa in front of the fireplace; on the chimney-shelf were two vases filled with flowers; there were more flowers on a table in front of the window.—The Abbé's face, amazed at this unexpectedly festal sight, and at the change in the room so suddenly restored to its original order, showed me that the dying woman had banished all the odious apparatus that surrounds a bed of sickness. She had exerted the last strength of a dying fever to dress her disordered room for the worthy reception of him whom she loved at this moment above all else.

Her haggard face, under a voluminous lace wrapper, had the greenish pallor of magnolia flowers when they first open, and looked like the first outline for a portrait of a head we love sketched in chalk on yellow-white canvas; but to understand how deeply the vulture's talons clutched at my heart, picture this sketch with the eyes finished and full of life—hollow eyes, glittering with unwonted light in a colorless face. She no longer had the calm supremacy which she had derived from constant victory over her griefs. Her brow, the only part of her face that had preserved its fine proportions, expressed the aggressive audacity of suppressed craving and threats. In spite of the waxen hues of her drawn face, internal fires flashed forth with an effluence that resembled the quivering atmosphere over the fields on a hot day. Her hollow temples, her sunken cheeks, showed the bony structure of the face, and her white lips wore a smile that vaguely resembled the grin of a skull. Her gown, crossed over her bosom, betrayed how thin she had grown.

The expression of her face plainly showed that she knew how much she was changed, and that it had brought her to despair. She was no longer the sportive Henriette, nor the sublime and saintly Mme. de Mortsauf; but the nameless thing that Bossuet speaks of, struggling against annihilation, urged by hunger and cheated appetites, to a self-centered battle of life and death.

I sat down by her side and took her hand to kiss it; it was burning and dry. She read my pained surprise in the very effort I made to conceal it. Her discolored lips were stretched over her ravenous teeth in an attempt at one of those forced smiles under which we disguise alike irony and vengeance, the anticipation of pleasure, ecstasy of soul, or the fury of disappointment.

"It is death, my poor Félix," she said; "and death does not charm you! Hideous death—death which every creature, even the boldest lover, holds in horror. Love ceases here! I knew it full well. Lady Dudley will never see you shocked by such a change. Oh! why have I so longed for you, Félix? And at last you are here and I reward your devotion by the horrible spectacle which made the Comte de Rancé turn Trappist; I, who hoped to dwell in your remembrance beautiful, noble, like an immortal Lily, I destroy all your illusions. True love makes no calculations.

"But do not fly: stay. M. Origet thought me much better this morning; I shall live again—be renewed under your eyes. And then, when I shall have recovered my strength a little, when I can take some food, I shall grow handsome again. I am but five-and-thirty; I may have some years of beauty yet. Happiness renews youth, and I mean to be happy. I have made the most delightful plans. We will leave them all at Clochegourde and go to Italy together."

Tears rose to my eyes; I turned away to the table, as if to admire the flowers; the Abbé hastily came up to me and leaned over the nosegay: "No tears," said he in a whisper.

"What, Henriette, have you ceased to love our dear valley?" said I, as an excuse for my sudden movement.

"No," she said, touching my forehead with her lips with coaxing softness; "but without you it is fatal to me—with-



out thee (*sans toi*)," she corrected herself, touching my ear with her hot lips to breathe the two words like a sigh.

I was dismayed by this crazy caress, which gave weight to the terrible hints of the two priests. My first surprise passed off; but though I could now exercise my reason, my will was not strong enough to restrain the nervous excitement that tormented me during this scene. I listened without replying, or rather I replied by a fixed smile and nods of assent, merely not to contradict her, as a mother treats her child. After being startled by the change in her person, I perceived that the woman who had once been so dignified in her loftiness, had now in her attitude, her voice, her manners, her looks, and her ideas, the artless simplicity of a child, the ingenuous grace, the restless movements, the absolute indifference to everything that is not itself or the object of its desire, which, in a child, cry out for protection.

Is it always thus with the dying? Do they cast off every social disguise, as a child that has not yet assumed them? Or was it that the Countess, on the brink of eternity, while rejecting every human emotion but love, expressed its sweet innocence after the manner of Chloë?

"You will bring me health as you used to do, Félix," said she, "and my valley will be good to me again. How can I help eating anything you give me? You are such a good nurse! And besides, you are so rich in health and strength that life is contagious from you.

"My dear, prove to me that I am not to die, and to die disappointed. They think that I suffer most from thirst. Oh, yes, I am very thirsty, my dear. It hurts me dreadfully to see the waters of the Indre; but my heart suffers a more burning thirst. I thirsted for you," she said in a smothered voice, taking my hands in her burning hands and drawing me towards her to speak the words in my ear. "My agony was that I could not see you. Did you not bid me live?—I will live! I will ride—I, too, I will know everything—Paris, festivities, pleasures!"

Oh, Natalie! this dreadful outcry, which the materialism of the senses makes so cold at a distance, made our ears tingle—the old priest's and mine; the tones of that beautiful voice

represented the struggles of a whole life, the anguish of a true love always balked.

The Countess stood up with an impatient effort, like a child that wants a toy. When the confessor saw his penitent in this mood, the poor man fell on his knees, clasped his hands, and began to pray.

"Yes, I will live!" she cried, making me stand too, and leaning on me; "live on realities and not on lies. My whole life has been one of lies; I have been counting them over these last days. Is it possible that I should die, I who have not lived? I who have never been to meet anyone on a heath?" She paused, seemed to listen, and smelt something through the very walls.

"Félix, the vintagers are going to dinner, and I, the mistress, am starving," she said in a childish tone. "It is the same with love; they are happy!"

"*Kyrie eleison!*" said the poor Abbé, who, with clasped hands and eyes raised to Heaven, was repeating litanies.

She threw her arms round my neck, clasping me with vehemence as she said—

"You shall escape me no more! I mean to be loved, I will be as mad as Lady Dudley, I will learn English to say *My Dee* very prettily." She gave me a little nod, as she had been wont to do when leaving me, to assure me that she would return immediately. "We will dine together," said she. "I will go and tell Manette——" But she stopped, overcome by weakness, and I laid her, dressed as she was, on her bed.

"Once before you carried me just so," she said, opening her eyes.

She was very light, but very hot; as I held her I felt her whole body burning. M. Deslandes came in, and was astonished to find the room dressed out; on seeing me he understood everything.

"We suffer much before we die, monsieur," said she in a husky voice.

He sat down, felt her pulse, rose hastily, spoke a few words to the priest in an undertone, and left the room; I followed him.

"What are you going to do?" I asked him.

"To spare her intolerable torments," said he. "Who could have conceived of so much vitality? We cannot understand how she is still living. This is the forty-second day that the Countess has neither eaten, drunk, nor slept."

M. Deslandes sent for Manette. The Abbé led me into the gardens.

"Let us leave the doctor free," said he. "With Manette's help he will wrap her in opium.—Well, you have heard her," he said, "if indeed it is she who yields to these mad impulses——"

"No," said I, "it is she no more."

I was stupefied with grief. As I walked on, every detail of this brief scene gained importance. I hastily went out of the little gate of the lower terrace and seated myself in the punt, where I ensconced myself to be left alone with my thoughts. I tried to tear myself away from the power by which I lived; a torture like that by which the Tartars were wont to punish adultery by wedging a limb of the guilty person into a cleft block, and giving him a knife wherewith to free himself if he did not wish to starve; a fearful penance through which my soul was passing, since I had to amputate its nobler half. My life, too, was a failure!

Despair suggested strange ideas. Now, I would die with her; again, I would cloister myself at La Meilleraye, where the Trappists had just established a retreat. My clouded eyes no longer saw external objects. I gazed at the windows of the room where Henriette lay suffering, fancying I saw the light that burned there that night when I had dedicated myself to her. Ought I not to have obeyed the simple rule of life she had laid down for me, preserving myself hers in the toil of business? Had she not enjoined on me to become a great man, so as to preserve myself from the base and degrading passions to which I had given way like every other man? Was not chastity a sublime distinction which I had failed to keep? Love, as Arabella conceived of it, suddenly filled me with disgust.

Just as I raised my stricken head, wondering whence henceforth I was to derive light and hope, a slight rustle disturbed

the air; I looked towards the terrace and saw Madeleine slowly walking there, alone. While I made my way to the terrace, intending to ask the dear child the reason of the cold look she had given me at the foot of the cross, she had seated herself on the bench; as she saw me coming she rose, affecting not to have perceived me, so as not to be alone with me; her step was rapid and significant. She hated me. She was flying from her mother's murderer. Returning to the house up the flight of steps I saw Madeleine standing motionless, listening to my approach. Jacques was sitting on a step, and his attitude was expressive of the same insensibility as had struck me when we were walking together, leaving me possessed by such ideas as we bury in a corner of the soul to return to and examine later, at leisure. I have observed that all those who are doomed to die young are calmly indifferent to burials.

I wanted to question this melancholy soul. Had Madeleine kept her thoughts to herself, or had she communicated her hatred to Jacques?

"You know," said I, to open a conversation, "that you have in me a most devoted brother."

"Your friendship is worthless to me," said he. "I shall follow my mother," and he gave me a fierce look of suffering.

"Jacques!" I cried, "you too?"

He coughed and turned away; then when he came back he hastily showed me his blood-stained handkerchief.

"You understand?" he said.

Thus each had a secret. As I afterwards saw, the brother and sister avoided each other. Henriette gone, everything at Clochegourde was falling into ruin.

"Madame is asleep," Manette came to tell us, happy to see the Countess relieved from pain.

In such fearful moments, though everybody knows the inevitable end, true affection goes crazy and clings to the smallest joys. The minutes are ages which we would gladly make ages of ease. We wish that the sufferer might sleep in roses, we would take their pain if we could; we long that the last sigh should be unconsciously breathed.

"M. Deslandes had the flowers removed; they were too much for madame's nerves," said Manette.

So it was the flowers that had made her delirious; she was not guilty. The loves of earthly creatures, the joys of fruitfulness, the yearnings of plants had intoxicated her with their fragrance, and had no doubt revived the thoughts of happy love that had slumbered within her from her youth.

"Come, M. Félix," said Manette, "come and look at madame; she is as lovely as an angel."

I went back to the dying woman's room just as the setting sun was gilding the gabled roofs of the Château of Azay. All was still and clear. A softened light fell upon the bed where Henriette lay lapped in opium. At this moment the body was, so to speak, annihilated; the soul alone was seen in the face, as serene as a bright sky after a storm. Blanche and Henriette—the two beautiful aspects of the same woman—appeared before me, all the more beautiful because my memory, my mind, my imagination, helping nature, restored the perfection of each feature, to which the spirit triumphant lent fitful lights, coming and going as she breathed.

The two priests sat at the foot of the bed. The Count stood thunderstruck, recognizing the banners of death floating above that adored head. I took a seat on the sofa she had been occupying. Then we four exchanged glances in which our admiration of her heavenly beauty mingled with tears of regret.

The gleam of intelligence announced the return of God to one of His loveliest tabernacles. The Abbé de Dominis and I communicated our mutual feelings by signs. Yes, the angels kept guard over Henriette! Yes, their swords flashed above that noble brow, where we now saw the august stamp of virtue which of old had made the soul visible, as it were, holding communion with the spirits of its own sphere. The lines of her face were purified, every feature grew grander and more majestic under the invisible censers of the seraphim that watched over her. The green hues of physical torment gave way to the perfect whiteness, the dead, cold pallor of approaching death.

Jacques and Madeleine came in: Madeleine gave us all

a thrill by the adoring impulse which made her fall on her knees by the bed, clasp her hands, and utter the inspired exclamation: "At last! This is my mother!" Jacques was smiling: he knew he was following his mother whither she was going.

"She is reaching the haven!" said the Abbé Birotteau.

The Abbé de Dominis looked at me, as much as to say: "Did I not tell you that the star would rise effulgent?"

Madeleine kept her eyes riveted on her mother, breathing with her breath, echoing her faint sighs, the last thread that held her to life, we counting them with dread lest it should break at each effort. Like an angel at the gates of the sanctuary the young girl was at once eager and calm, strong and prostrate.

At this moment the Angelus rang out from the village bell-fry; the waves of mellowed air brought up the sound in gusts, announcing that at this hour all Christendom was repeating the words spoken by the angel to the woman who made reparation for the sins of her sex. This evening the *Ave Maria* came to us as a greeting from Heaven. The prophecy was so sure, the event so near, that we melted into tears.

The murmurous sounds of the evening—a melodious breeze in the leaves, the last twitter of the birds, the buzz and hum of insects, the voice of waters, the plaintive cry of the tree-frog—all the land was taking leave of the loveliest Lily of this valley and her simple, rural life. The religious poetry of the scene, added to all this natural poetry, so well expressed a chant of departure that our sobs began again.

Though the bedroom door was open, we were so lost in this terrible contemplation, trying to stamp on our minds the memory of it, forever, that we did not observe all the servants of the house kneeling in a group outside and putting up fervent prayers. All these poor souls, accustomed to hope, had thought they should still keep their mistress, and these unmistakable signs overwhelmed them. At a sign from the Abbé Birotteau the old huntsman went to fetch the Curé of Saché. The doctor, standing by the bed, as calm as science, holding his patient's torpid hand, had signed to the confessor to express that this sleep was the last hour of ease that was

given to the recalled angel. The moment had come for administering the last sacraments of the Church.

At nine o'clock she gently awoke and looked at us in mild surprise; we saw our idol in all the beauty of her best days.

"Mother, you are too beautiful to die, life and health are coming back to you!" cried Madeleine.

"My dear daughter, I shall live—but in you," said she, with a smile.

Then came heartrending farewells from the mother to the children, and from the children to the mother. M. de Mortsauk kissed his wife piously on the brow. The Countess flushed as she saw me.

"Dear Félix," said she, "this is, I believe, the only grief I shall ever have given you! But forget all I may have said to you, poor crazed thing as I was!" She held out her hand; I took it to kiss, and she said with a smile of virtue—"As of old, Félix?"

We all left the room, and remained in the drawing-room while the sick woman made her last confession. I sat down next to Madeleine. In the presence of them all, she could not avoid me without being rude; but, as her mother used, she looked at no one, and kept silence without once raising her eyes to mine.

"Dear Madeleine," said I in a low voice, "what grievance have you against me? Why such coldness when, in the presence of death, we ought to be friends?"

"I fancy I can hear what my mother is saying at this moment," replied she, putting on the expression that Ingres had given to his "Mother of God," the mourning Virgin preparing to protect the World in which her Son is about to perish.

"Then you condemn me at the moment when your mother is absolving me, supposing me to be guilty."

"You, and always you!" She spoke with unreasoning hatred, like that of a Corsican, as implacable as all judgments are that are pronounced by those who, not knowing life, admit no extenuation of the sins committed against the laws of the heart.

An hour passed in utter silence. The Abbé Birotteau came

in after hearing the Comtesse de Mortsauf's general confession, and we all went into her room again. Henriette, in obedience to one of the ideas that occur to noble souls, all sisters in purpose, had been robed in a long garment that was to serve as her winding-sheet. We found her sitting up in bed, beautiful with expiation and hope; I saw in the fireplace the black ashes of my letters which had just been burnt; a sacrifice she would not make, the confessor told me, till she was at the point of death. She smiled at us all—her old smile. Her eyes, moist with tears, were, we saw, finally unsealed; she already saw the celestial joys of the promised land.

"Dear Félix," she said, holding out her hand and pressing mine. "Stay. You must be present at one of the closing scenes of my life, which will not be one of the least painful of all, but in which you are intimately concerned."

She made a sign, and the door was shut. By her desire the Count sat down; the Abbé Birotteau and I remained standing. With Manette's assistance the Countess got up and knelt down before the astonished Count, insisting on remaining there. Then, when Manette had left the room, she raised her head, which she had bent, resting it on his knees.

"Though I have always been a faithful wife to you," said she in a broken voice, "I have perhaps, monsieur, failed in my duties. I have prayed to God to give me strength to ask your forgiveness of my faults. I have perhaps devoted to the cares of a friendship outside my home, attentions more affectionate than I owed even to you. Perhaps I have annoyed you by the comparisons you may have drawn between those cares, those thoughts, and such as I have given to you. I have known," she said in a very low voice, "a great friendship, which no one, not even he who was its object, ever wholly knew. Though I have been virtuous by all human law, a blameless wife to you, thoughts—voluntary or involuntary—have found their way into my mind, and I fear I may have cherished them too gladly. But as I have always loved you truly, and have been your obedient wife, as the clouds passing across the sky have never darkened its clearness, you behold me craving your blessing with



an unsullied brow. I can die without a bitter pang if I may hear from your lips one loving word for your Blanche, the mother of your children, and if you will forgive all these things, which she did not forgive herself till she had received the absolution of the tribunal to which we all bow."

"Blanche, Blanche," cried the old man, suddenly bursting into tears over his wife's head, "do you want to kill me?"

He raised her in his arms with unwonted strength, and clasping her to him, "Have I no forgiveness to ask?" he went on. "Have I not often been harsh? Are you not magnifying a child's scruples?"

"Perhaps," said she. "But be tender, my dear, to the weakness of the dying; soothe my soul. When you are in the hour of death you will remember that I blessed you as we parted.

"Will you allow me to leave to our friend here this pledge of deep regard?" said she, pointing to a letter on the chimney-shelf. "He is now my adopted son, nothing more. The heart, my dear Count, has its bequests to make; my last words are to impress on our dear Félix certain duties to be carried out; I do not think I have expected too much of him—grant that I may not have expected too much of you in allowing myself to bequeath to him a few thoughts. I am still a woman," she said, bowing her head with sweet melancholy; "after being forgiven, I ask a favor.—Read it, but not till after my death," she added, handing me the mysterious manuscript.

The Count saw his wife turn paler; he lifted her, and himself carried her to the bed, where we gathered round her.

"Félix," said she, "I may have done you some wrong. I may often have given you pain by leading you to hope for joys I dared not give; but is it not to my courage as a wife and as a mother that I owe the comfort of dying reconciled to you all? So you too will forgive me, you who have so often accused me, and whose injustice was a pleasure to me."

The Abbé Birotteau put his finger to his lips. At this

hint the dying woman bowed her head; weakness was too much for her; she waved her hands to express that the priest, the children, and the servants were to be admitted; then, with a commanding gesture to me, she pointed to the Count, quite crushed, and her children as they entered. The sight of that father, whose insanity none knew save herself and me, the guardian now of these delicate creatures, inspired her with mute entreaties which fell on my soul like sacred fire. Before receiving extreme unction she begged pardon of her servants for being sometimes rough with them, she asked their prayers, and commended each separately to the Count. She nobly confessed that, during the past few months, she had uttered complaints little worthy of a Christian, which might have scandalized her dependents. She had been cold to her children, and had given way to unseemly sentiments; but she ascribed to her intolerable sufferings this want of submission to the will of God.

Finally, she publicly thanked the Abbé Birotteau, with touching and heartfelt effusiveness, for having shown her the vanity of all earthly things.

When she ceased speaking all began to pray, and the Curé of Saché administered the Viaticum. A few minutes later her breathing became difficult, a cloud dimmed her eyes, though she presently opened them again to give me a last look, and she died in the presence of us all, hearing perhaps the chorus of our sobs.

At the moment when she breathed her last sigh—the last pang of a life that was one long pain, I felt myself struck by a blow which paralyzed all my faculties.

The Count and I remained by the bed of death all night, with the two Abbés and the Curé, watching the dead by the light of the tapers, as she lay on the mattress, calm now, where she had suffered so much.

This was my first personal knowledge of death. I sat the whole night through, my eyes fixed on Henriette, fascinated by the pure expression given by the stilling of every tempest, by the pallor of the face on which I still read numberless affections, which could no longer respond to my love.

What majesty there is in that silence and coldness! How

many reflections do they utter! What beauty in that perfect repose, what command in that motionless sleep! All the past is there, and the future has begun. Ah! I loved her as well in death as I had in life.

In the morning the Count went to bed, the three weary priests fell asleep at that hour of exhaustion, so well known to all who have watched through a night. And then, alone with her, I could, unseen, kiss her brow with all the love she had never allowed me to express.

On the next day but one, in a cool autumn morning, we followed the Countess to her last home. She was borne to the grave by the old huntsman, the two Martineaus, and Manette's husband. We went down the road I had so gleefully come up on the day when I returned to her. We crossed the valley of the Indre to reach the little graveyard of Saché—a humble village cemetery, lying at the back of the church on the brow of a hill, where she had desired to be buried, out of Christian humility, with a plain cross of black wood, like a poor laboring woman, as she had said.

When, from the middle of the valley, I caught sight of the village church and the graveyard, I was seized with a convulsive shudder. Alas! we each have a Golgotha in our life, where we leave our first three and thirty years, receiving then a spear-thrust in our heart, and feeling on our head a crown of thorns in the place of the crown of roses: this hill was to me the Mount of Expiation.

We were followed by an immense crowd that had collected to express the regrets of the whole valley, where she had silently buried endless acts of benevolence. We knew from Manette, whom she trusted entirely, that she economized in dress to help the poor when her savings were insufficient. Naked children had been clothed, baby-linen supplied, mothers rescued, sacks of corn bought of the millers in winter for helpless old men, a cow bestowed on a poverty-stricken household; in short, all the good works of a Christian, a mother, a lady bountiful; and sums of money given to help loving couples to marry, or to provide substitutes for young men drawn by the conscription, touching gifts from the loving

soul that had said: "The happiness of others becomes the joy of those who can no longer be happy."

These facts, talked over every evening for the last three days, had brought together a vast throng. I followed the bier with Jacques and the two Abbés. According to custom neither Madeleine nor the Count was present; they remained alone at Clochegourde. Manette insisted on coming.

"Poor madame! poor madame! she is happy now!" I heard many times spoken through sobs.

At the moment when the procession turned off from the road to the mills there was an unanimous groan, mingled with weeping that was enough to make one think that the valley had lost its soul.

The church was full of people. After the service we went to the cemetery where she was to be buried close to the cross. When I heard the stones and gravel rattle on the coffin my strength failed me. I had to ask the Martineaus to support me, and they led me half dead to the Château of Saché: there the owners politely offered me shelter, which I accepted. I confess I could not endure to return to Clochegourde; I would not go to Frapesle whence I could see Henriette's home. Here I was near her.

I spent some days in a room whose windows overlooked the tranquil and solitary coombe of which I have spoken; it is a deep ravine in the hills, overgrown with secular oaks, and down it a torrent rushes in heavy rains. The scene was suited to the severe and solemn meditations to which I gave myself up.

In the course of the day following that fatal night, I had seen how intrusive my presence at Clochegourde would be. The Count had given way to violent feelings at Henriette's death; still, the dreadful event was expected, and in the depths of his heart there was a prepared calmness verging on indifference. I had more than once seen this, and when the Countess had given me the letter I dared not open, when she spoke of her affection for me, this man, suspicious as he was, had not given me the fulminating glance I had expected. He had ascribed his wife's words to the excessive delicacy of her conscience, which he knew to be so pure.

This selfish insensibility was but natural. The souls of these two beings had been no more wedded than their bodies, they had never had that incessant intimacy which renews feeling; they had no communion of griefs or joys, those close ties which, when they are broken, leave us sore at so many points, because they are one with every fiber, because they are rooted in every fold of the heart, while soothing the soul which sanctions every such tie.

Madeleine's hostility closed Clochegourde to me. This stern young thing was not inclined to come to terms with her aversion, over her mother's grave; and I should have been dreadfully uncomfortable between the Count, who would have talked of himself, and the mistress of the house, who would have made no secret of her invincible dislike. And to live on such terms there—where of old the very flowers had caressed me, where the terrace steps were eloquent, where all my memories lent poetry to the balconies, the parapets, the balustrades and terraces, to the trees, and to every point of view; to be hated where all had been love! I could not endure the thought. So my mind was made up from the first. This then, alas! was the end of the strongest love that ever dwelt in the heart of man. In the eyes of strangers my conduct would seem blameworthy, but it had the sanction of my conscience.

This is the outcome of the finest sentiments, the greatest dramas of youth. We all set forth one fine morning, as I had started from Tours for Clochegourde, annexing the world, our heart craving for love; then, when our treasure has been through the crucible, when we have mixed with men, and known events, it all seems unaccountably small, we find so little gold among the ashes. Such is life—life in its reality!—a great deal of aspiration, a small result.

I meditated on myself at great length, wondering what I could do after a blow that had cut down all my flowers.—I determined to rush into politics and science, by the tortuous paths of ambition, to cut women out of my life entirely, and be a statesman—cold, passionless, faithful to the saint I had loved. My thoughts went far away, out of sight, while my eyes were fixed on the glorious background of golden

oaks with their somber heads and feet of bronze.—I asked myself whether Henriette's virtue had not been mere ignorance, whether I were really guilty of her death. I struggled against the burden of remorse. At last, one limpid autumn day, under one of heaven's latest smiles, so lovely in Touraine, I read the letter which, by her instructions, I was not to open before her death—and I read as follows:

*Mme. de Mortsauf to the Vicomte Félix de Vandenesse.*

"Félix, friend too much beloved, I must now open my heart to you, less to tell you how well I love you than to show you the extent of your obligations, by revealing the depth and severity of the wounds you have made in it. At this moment, when I am dropping, exhausted by the fatigues of the journey, worn out by the strokes I have received in the fight, the woman, happily, is dead, the mother alone survives. You will see, my dear, how you were the first cause of my woes. Though I afterwards submitted, not unwillingly, to your blows, I am now dying of a last wound inflicted by you; but there is exquisite delight in feeling oneself crushed by the man one loves.

"Before long my sufferings will, no doubt, rob me of my strength, so I take advantage of the last gleam of intelligence to implore you, once more, to fill the place towards my children of the heart you have robbed them of. If I loved you less, I should lay this charge on you authoritatively, but I would rather leave you to assume it out of saintly repentance, and also as a perpetuation of your love for me. Has not our love been always mingled with repentant reflections and expiatory fears? And we love each other still, I know it.

"Your fault is fatal, not so much through your own act as through the importance I have given it in my own heart. Did I not tell you that I was jealous—jealous unto death? Well, I am dying. Yet, be comforted. We have satisfied human law. The Church, through one of its purest speakers, has assured me that God will show mercy to those who have sacrificed their natural weakness to the commandments. So

let me, my beloved, tell you all, for I would not keep a single thought from you. What I shall confess to God in my last hour, you too must know who are the king of my heart, as He is the King of Heaven.

"Until the ball given to the Duc d'Angoulême, the only one I ever went to, marriage had left me in the perfect ignorance which gives a maiden's soul its angelic beauty. I was, indeed, a mother, but love had given me none of its permitted pleasures. How was it that this happened? I know not; nor do I know by what law everything in me was changed in an instant. Do you still remember your kisses? They mastered my life, they burnt into my soul. The fire in your blood awoke the fire in mine; your youth became one with my youth; your longing entered into my heart. When I stood up so proudly, I felt a sensation for which I know no word in any language, for children have found no word to express the marriage of their eyes to the light, or the kiss of life on their lips. Yes, it was indeed the sound that first roused the echo, the light flashing in darkness, the impulse given to the universe—at least, it was as instantaneous as all these; but far more beautiful, for it was life to a soul! I understood that there was in the world something I had never known, a power more glorious than thought; that it was all thought, all power, a whole future in a common emotion. I was now no more than half a mother. This thunderbolt, falling on my heart, fired the desires that slept there unknown to me; I suddenly understood what my aunt had meant when she used to kiss my brow, and say, 'Poor Henriette!'

"On my return to Clochegourde, the spring-time, the first leaves, the scent of flowers, the pretty fleecy clouds, the Indre, the sky, all spoke to me in a tongue I had never yet understood, and which restored to my soul some of the impetus you had given to my senses. If you have forgotten those terrible kisses, I have never been able to efface them from my memory: I am dying of them! .

"Yes, every time I have seen you since, you have revived the impression; I have thrilled from head to foot when I saw you, from the mere presentiment of your coming.

Neither time nor my firm determination has been able to quench this insistent rapture. I involuntarily wondered, What then must pleasure be? Our exchange of glances, your respectful kisses on my hands, my arm resting in yours, your voice in its tender tones, in short, the veriest trifles disturbed me so violently that a cloud almost always darkened my sight, and the hum of my rebellious blood sang in my ears. Oh! if in those moments when I was colder to you than ever, you had taken me in your arms, I should have died of happiness. Sometimes I have longed that you might be over bold—but prayer soon drove out that evil thought. Your name spoken by my children filled my heart with hotter blood which mounted in a flush to my face, and I would lay snares for poor little Madeleine, to make her mention it, so dearly did I love the surge of that emotion.

“How can I tell you all? Your writing had its charms; I gazed at your letters as we study a portrait. And if, from that first day you had such a fateful power over me, you may imagine, my friend, that it must have become infinite when you allowed me to read to the bottom of your soul. What ecstasy was mine when I found you so pure, so perfectly true, gifted with such great qualities, capable of such great things, and already so sorely tried! A man and a child, timid and brave! What joy it was to find that we had been dedicated to a common suffering!

“From that evening when we confided in each other, to lose you was death to me; I kept you near me out of selfishness. I was deeply touched to find that M. de la Berge was certain that I should die of your absence; he then had read my heart. He decided that I was indispensable to my children and to the Count; he desired me not to forbid you the house, for I promised him to remain pure in deed and thought. ‘Thought is involuntary,’ said he, ‘but it may be guarded in the midst of torments.’ ‘If I think,’ said I, ‘all will be lost; save me from myself! He must stay near me but I must remain virtuous—help me!’

“The good old man, though most severe, was indulgent to my honest purpose: ‘you can love him as a son, and look forward to his marrying your daughter,’ said he.



"I bravely took up a life of endurance that I might not lose you, and suffered gladly when I was sure that we were called to bear the same burden. Ah, God! I remained neutral, faithful to my husband, and never allowing you, Félix, to take a step in your dominion. The frenzy of my passions reacted on my faculties. I regarded the trials inflicted on me by M. de Mortsauf as expiations, and endured them with pride to outrage my guilty wishes. Of old I had been prone to discontent, but after you came to be near us I recovered some spirit, which was a satisfaction to M. de Mortsauf. But for the strength you lent me I should long ago have sunk under the inward life I have told you of. Yes, you have counted for much in the doing of my duty. It is the same with regard to the children; I felt I had robbed them of something, and I feared I could never do enough for them. Henceforth my life was one continued anguish that I cherished. Feeling myself less a mother, less a faithful wife, remorse made its abode in my heart, and for fear of failing in my duties I constantly overdid them. Hence, to save myself, I set Madeleine between us, intending you for each other, and thus raising a barrier between you and me. An unavailing barrier! Nothing could repress the stress of feeling you gave me. Absent or present your power was the same. I loved Madeleine more than Jacques, because Madeleine was to be yours.

"Still, I could not yield to my daughter without a struggle; I told myself that I was but twenty-eight when I first met you, and that you were nearly twenty-two. I abridged distances, I allowed myself to indulge false hopes. Oh, my dear Félix, I make this confession to spare you some remorse; partly, perhaps, to show you that I was not insensible, that our sufferings in love were cruelly equalized, and that Arabella was in nothing my superior. I too was one of those daughters of the fallen race whom men love so well.

"There was a time when the conflict was so fearful that I wept all the night, and night after night; my hair fell out—you have that hair! You remember M. de Mortsauf's illness. Your magnanimity at that time, far from raising

me, made me fall lower. Alas! there was a time when I longed to throw myself into your arms as the reward of so much heroism; but that madness was brief. I laid it at the footstool of God during that Mass which you refused to attend. Then Jacques's illness and Madeleine's ill health seemed to me as threats from God, who was trying thus to recall the erring sheep. And your love for that English-woman, natural as it was, revealed to me secrets of which I knew nothing; I loved you more than I knew I did. I lost sight of Madeleine.

"The constant agitations of this storm-tossed life, the efforts I made to subdue myself with no help but that of religion, have laid the seeds of the disease I am dying of. That dreadful blow brought on attacks of which I would say nothing. I saw in death the only possible conclusion to this unrevealed tragedy.

"I lived a whole life of passion, jealousy, fury, during the two months between the news given me by my mother of your connection with Lady Dudley and your arrival here. I wanted to go to Paris, I thirsted for murder, I longed for the death of that woman, I was insensible to the affection of my children. Prayer, which until then had been a balm to me, had no further effect on my spirit. It was jealousy that made the breach through which death entered in. Still, I maintained a placid front, yes, that time of conflict was a secret between God and me.

"When I was quite sure that I was as much loved by you as you were by me, and that it was nature only and not your heart that had made you faithless, I longed to live—but it was too late. God had taken me under His protection, in pity no doubt for a being true to herself, true to Him, whose sufferings had so constantly brought her to the gates of the sanctuary. My best-beloved, God has judged me, M. de Mortsauf will no doubt forgive me, but you—will you be merciful? Will you listen to the voice which at this moment reaches you from my tomb? Will you make good the disasters for which we both are responsible—you, perhaps, less than I? You know what I would ask of you. Be to M. de Mortsauf what a Sister of Charity is

to a sick man: listen to him, love him,—no one will love him. Stand between him and his children as I have always done.

“The task will not be a long one. Jacques will soon leave home to live in Paris with his grandfather, and you have promised to guide him among the rocks of the world. As to Madeleine, she will marry; would that she might some day accept you! She is all myself, and she is also strong in the will that I lack, in the energy needed in the companion of a man whose career must carry him through the storms of political life; she is clever and clear-sighted. If your destinies were united she would be happier than her mother has been. By acquiring a right to carry on my work at Clochegourde you would wipe out such errors as have been insufficiently atoned for, though forgiven in heaven and on earth, for he is generous and will forgive.

“I am still egotistical, you see; but is not that a proof of overweening love? I want you to love me in those that belong to me. Never having been yours by right, I bequeath to you my cares and duties. If you will not marry Madeleine, at least you will secure the repose of my soul by making M. de Mortsauf as happy as it is possible for him to be.

“Farewell, dear son of my heart; this is a perfectly rational leave-taking, still full of life; the adieux of a soul on which you have bestowed joys so great that you should feel no remorse over the catastrophe they have led to. And I say this as I remember that you love me; for I am going to the home of rest, a victim to duty, and—which makes me shudder—I cannot go without a regret! God knows better than I can whether I have obeyed His holy laws in the spirit. I have often stumbled, no doubt, but I never fell, and the most pressing cause of my errors lay in the temptations that surrounded me. The Lord will see me, quaking quite as much as though I had yielded.

“Once more farewell—such a farewell as I yesterday bade our beloved valley, in whose lap I shall soon be lying, and to which you will often come, will you not?

“HENRIETTE.”

I sat, sunk in a gulf of meditations as I here saw the unknown depths of her life lighted up by this flash. The clouds of my selfishness vanished. So she had suffered as much as I—more, since she was dead. She had believed that everybody else must be kind to her friend; her love had so effectually blinded her that she had never suspected her daughter's animosity. This last proof of her affection was a painful thing: poor Henriette wanted to give me Clochegourde and her daughter!

Natalie, since the dreadful day when, for the first time I entered a graveyard, following the remains of that noble creature, whom you now know, the sun has been less warm and bright, the night has been blacker, action has been less prompt with me, thought a greater burden. We lay many to rest under the earth, but some of them, especially dear, have our heart for their winding-sheet, their memory is perpetually one with its throbs; we think of them as we breathe; they dwell in us by a beautiful law of metempsychosis peculiar to love. There is a soul within my soul. When I do any good thing, when I speak a noble word, it is that soul which speaks and acts; all that is good in me emanates from that tomb as from a lily whose scent embalms the air. Mockery, evil speaking, all you blame in me, is myself.

And now, when a cloud dims my eyes and they look up to heaven after long resting on the earth, when my lips make no response to your words or your kindness, do not henceforth ask me, "What are you thinking about?"

Dear Natalie, I had ceased writing for some little time; these reminiscences had agitated me too painfully. I must now relate the events that followed on this misfortune. They can be told in a few words. When a life consists only of action and stir it is soon recorded; but when it is spent in the loftiest regions of the soul the story must be diffuse.

Henriette's letter showed me one bright star of hope. In this tremendous shipwreck I saw an island I might reach.—To live at Clochegourde with Madeleine, and devote my life to her was a lot to satisfy all the ideas that tossed my soul; but I must first learn Madeleine's true opinions. I had to take leave of the Count; I went to Clochegourde to

call on him, and met him on the terrace. There we walked together for some time.

At first he spoke of his wife as a man who understood the extent of his loss, and all the ruin it had wrought in his home life. But after that first cry of sorrow, he was evidently more anxious about the future than about the present. He was afraid of his daughter, who was not, he said, so gentle as her mother. Madeleine's firm temper and a tinge of something heroical, mingling in her with her mother's gracious nature, terrified the old man, accustomed as he was to Henriette's tender kindness; he foresaw meeting a will which nothing could bend. Still, what comforted him in his loss was the certainty of joining his wife ere long; the agitations and grief of the last few days had increased his malady and brought on his old pains; the conflict he foresaw between his authority as the father, and his daughter's as the mistress, of the house, would fill his last days with bitterness, for in cases where he could contend with his wife he would have to give way to his child. And then his son would go away, his daughter would marry—what sort of son-in-law should he have?

In the course of an hour, while he talked of nothing but himself, claiming my friendship for his wife's sake, I clearly saw before me the grandiose figure of the émigré, one of the most impressive types of our century. In appearance he was frail and broken, but life still clung to him by reason of his simple habits and agricultural occupations.

At this moment, when I write, he still lives.

Though Madeleine could see us pacing the terrace, she did not come down; she came out to the steps and went in again several times, to mark her disdain of me. I seized a moment when she had come out, to beg the Count to go up to the house; I wanted to speak to Madeleine, and I made a pretext of a last request left by the Countess; I had no other way of seeing her, and the Count went to fetch her, and left us together on the terrace.

"Dear Madeleine," said I, "I must speak a word with you. Was it not here that your mother used to listen to me when she had less to blame me for than the circumstances

of her life? My life and happiness are, as you know, bound up with this spot, and you banish me by the coldness you have assumed instead of the brotherly regard which used to unite us, and which death has made closer by a common sorrow. Dear Madeleine, for you I would this instant give my life without any hope of reward, without your knowing it even, for so truly do we love the children of the women who have been good to us in their lifetime—you know nothing of the scheme which your adored mother had cherished for the last seven years, and which may perhaps affect your views—but I will take no advantage of that! All I beseech of you is that you will not deprive me of the right of coming to breathe the air on this terrace, and to wait till time has modified your ideas of social life. At this moment I would not shock them for the world. I respect the grief that misleads you, for it deprives me too of the power of judging fairly of the position in which I find myself. The saint who is now watching over us will approve of the reserve I maintain when I only ask you to remain neutral, as between your own feelings and me.

“I love you too truly, in spite of the aversion you show for me, to lay a proposal before the Count, which he would hail with eager satisfaction. Be free. But by and by, consider that you will never know anybody in the world so well as you know me, that no man can bear in his heart feelings more devoted——”

So far Madeleine had listened with downcast eyes, but she stopped me with a gesture.

“Monsieur,” said she in a voice tremulous with agitation, “I, too, know all your mind. But I can never change in feeling towards you, and I would rather drown myself in the Indre than unite myself with you. Of myself I will not speak, but if my mother’s name can still influence you, in her name I beg you never to come to Clochegourde so long as I am here. The mere sight of you occasions me such distress as I cannot describe, and I shall never get over it.”

She bowed to me with much dignity, and went up to the house, never looking back; as rigid as her mother had been once, and once only, and quite pitiless. The girl’s clear sight

had, though only of late, seen to the bottom of her mother's heart, and her hatred of the man who seemed to her so fatal was increased perhaps by some regret at her own innocent complicity.

Here was an impassable gulf. Madeleine hated me without choosing to ascertain whether I was the cause or the victim of her griefs; and she would, I dare say, have hated both her mother and me if we had been happy. So this fair castle of promised happiness was in ruins.

I alone was ever to know the whole life of this noble unknown woman, I alone was in the secret of her feelings. I alone had studied her soul in its complete grandeur. Neither her mother, nor her father, nor her husband, nor her children had understood her.

It is a strange thing! I can turn over that pile of ashes, and take pleasure in spreading them before you; we may all find among them something of what has been dearest to us. How many families have their Henriette! How many noble creatures depart from earth without having met with an intelligent friend to tell their story, and to sound their hearts, and measure their depth and height! This is human life in its stern reality; and often mothers know no more of their children than the children know of them. And it is the same with married couples, lovers, brothers and sisters. Could I foresee that the day would come when, over my father's grave, I should go to law with Charles de Vandenesse, the brother to whose advancement I had so largely contributed? Good Heavens! How much may be learnt from the simplest tale!

When Madeleine had disappeared into the house I came away heart-broken, took leave of my hospitable friends, and set out for Paris along the right bank of the Indre—the road by which I had come down the valley for the first time. I was sad enough as I rode through the village of Pont de Ruan. And yet I was now rich; political life smiled upon me; I was no longer the weary wayfarer of 1814. Then my heart had been full of desires, now my eyes were full of tears; then I had to fill up my life, now I felt it a desert. I was still quite young—nine-and-twenty—and my heart was

crushed. A few years had been enough to rob the landscape of its pristine glory, and to disgust me with life. You may conceive then of my emotion when, on looking back, I discerned Madeleine on the terrace.

Wholly possessed by absorbing sorrow, I never thought of the end of my journey. Lady Dudley was far from my mind, when I found that I had unconsciously entered her courtyard. The blunder once made, I could but act it out.

My habits in the house were quite marital; I went upstairs, gloomy in anticipation of a vexatious rupture. If you have ever understood the character of Lady Dudley you can imagine how disconcerted I felt when her butler showed me, as I was, in traveling dress, into a drawing-room where she sat splendidly dressed with a party of five visitors. Lord Dudley, one of the most noteworthy of English statesmen, was standing in front of the fire—elderly, starch, arrogant, cold, with the satirical expression he must wear in the House; he smiled on hearing my name. With their mother were Arabella's two boys, astonishingly like de Marsay, one of the nobleman's natural sons, who was sitting on the sofa by the Marchioness.

Arabella, as soon as she saw me, assumed a lofty air, and stared at my traveling cap as if she were on the point of inquiring what had brought me to see her. She looked at me from head to foot, as she might have done at some country squire just introduced to her. As to our intimacy, our eternal passion, her vows that she must die if I ever ceased to love her—all the phantasmagoria of Armida—it had vanished like a dream. I had never held her hand, I was a stranger, she did not know me!

I was startled, in spite of the diplomatic coolness I was beginning to acquire; and any man in my place would have been no less so. De Marsay smiled as he looked at his boots, examining them with obvious significancy.

I made up my mind at once. From any other woman I would have submissively accepted my discomfiture; but enraged at finding this heroine, who was to die of love, alive and well, after laughing to scorn the woman who had died,



I determined to meet insolence with insolence. She knew of Lady Brandon's wreck; to remind her of it would be to stab her to the heart, even if it should turn the edge of the dagger.

"Madame," said I, "you will forgive me for coming to you in so cavalier a manner, when I tell you that I have this instant arrived from Touraine, and that Lady Brandon gave me a message for you which allows of no delay. I feared I might find that you had started for Lancashire; but since you are not leaving Paris, I await your orders at the hour when you will condescend to receive me."

She bowed, and I left the room.

From that day I have never seen her excepting in company, where we exchange friendly bows, with sometimes a repartee. I rally her about the inconsolable women of Lancashire, and she retorts about the Frenchwomen who do credit to their broken hearts by attacks of dyspepsia. Thanks to her good offices I have a mortal foe in de Marsay, whom she makes much of; and I, in return, say she has married father and son.

Thus my disaster was complete.

I took up the plan of life I had decided on during my retirement at Saché. I threw myself into hard work, I took up science, literature, and politics. On the accession of Charles X., who abolished the post I had filled under the late King, I made diplomacy my career. From that hour I vowed never to pay any attention to a woman, however beautiful, witty, or affectionate she might be. This conduct was a wonderful success. I gained incredible peace of mind, great powers of work, and I learnt that women waste men's lives and think they have indemnified them by a few gracious words.

However, all my fine resolutions have come to nothing—you know how and why.

Dearest Natalie, in relating my whole life without reserve or concealment, as I should to myself, in confessing to you feelings in which you had no part, I may perhaps have vexed some tender spot of your jealous and sensitive heart. But what would infuriate a vulgar woman will be, to you,

I am sure, a fresh reason for loving me. The noblest women have a sublime part to play towards suffering and aching souls, that of the Sister of Mercy who dresses their wounds, of the mother who forgives her children. Nor are artists and poets the only sufferers. Men who live for their country, for the future of nations, as they widen the circle of their passions and their thoughts, often find themselves in cruel solitude. They long to feel that by their side is some pure and devoted love. Believe me, they will know its greatness and its value.

To-morrow I shall know whether I have made a mistake in loving you.

*To M. le Comte Félix de Vandenesse.*

“Dear Count, you received, as you tell me, a letter from poor Mme. de Mortsauf which has been of some use in guiding you through the world, a letter to which you owe your high fortunes. Allow me to finish your education.

“I implore you to divest yourself of an odious habit. Do not imitate certain widows who are always talking of their first husband and throwing the virtues of the dear departed in the teeth of the second. I, dear Count, am a Frenchwoman; I should wish to marry the whole of the man I loved; now I really cannot marry Mme. de Mortsauf.

“After reading your narrative with the attention it deserves,—and you know what interest I feel in you—it strikes me that you must have bored Lady Dudley very considerably by holding up to her Mme. de Mortsauf’s perfections, while deeply wounding the Countess by expatiating on the various resources of English love-making. You have now failed in tact towards me, a poor creature who can boast of no merit but that of having attracted your liking; you have implied that I do not love you as much as either Henriette or Arabella. I confess my deficiencies. I know them; but why make me feel them so cruelly?

“Shall I tell you whom I pity?—The fourth woman you may love. She will inevitably be required to hold her own against three predecessors; so, in your interest as much as in hers, I must warn you against the perils of your memory.

"I renounce the laborious honor of loving you. I should require too many Catholic or Anglican virtues, and I have no taste for fighting ghosts. The virtues of the Virgin of Clochegourde would reduce the most self-confident woman to despair; and your dashing horsewoman discourages the boldest dreams of happiness. Do what she may, no woman can hope to give you satisfaction in proportion to her ambition. Neither heart nor senses can ever triumph over your reminiscences. You have forgotten that we often ride out together. I have not succeeded in warming up the sun that was chilled by your Henriette's decease; you would shiver by my side.

"My friend—for you will always be my friend—beware of repeating these confidences which strip your disenchantment bare, dishearten love, and compel a woman to doubt her powers. Love, my dear friend, lives on mutual trustfulness. The woman who, before she says a word or mounts her horse, stops to ask herself whether a heavenly Henriette did not speak better, or a horsewoman like Arabella did not display more grace, that woman, take my word for it, will have a trembling tongue and knees.

"You made me wish that I might receive some of your intoxicating nosegays—but you say you will make no more. Thus it is with a hundred things you no longer dare do, with thoughts and enjoyments which can never again be yours. No woman, be very sure, would choose to dwell in your heart elbowing the corpse you cherish there.

"You beseech me to love you out of Christian charity. I could, I own, do much out of charity—everything but love.

"You are sometimes dull and tiresome; you dignify your gloom by the name of melancholy, well and good; but it is intolerable, and fills the woman who loves you with cruel anxieties. I have come across that saint's tomb too often standing between us; I have reflected, and I have concluded that I have no wish to die like her. If you exasperated Lady Dudley, a woman of the first distinction, I, who have not her furious passions, fear I should even sooner grow cold.

"Put love out of the question as between you and me, since you no longer find happiness but with the dead, and let us be friends; I am willing.

"Why, my dear Count, you began by loving an adorable woman, a perfect mistress, who undertook to make your fortune, who procured you a peerage, who loved you to distraction—and you made her die of grief! Why, nothing can be more monstrous. Among the most ardent and the most luckless youths who drag their ambitions over the pavements of Paris, is there one who would not have behaved himself for ten years to obtain half the favors which you failed to recognize? When a man is so beloved, what more does he want?

"Poor woman! she suffered much; and you, when you have made a few sentimental speeches, think you have paid your debt over her bier. This, no doubt, is the prize that awaits my affection for you. Thank you, dear Count, but I desire no rival on either side of the grave.

"When a man has such a crime on his conscience, the least he can do is not to tell!

"I asked you a foolish question; it was in my part as a woman, a daughter of Eve. It was your part to calculate the results of the answer. You ought to have deceived me; I should have thanked you for it later. Have you understood wherein lies the merit of men who are liked by women? Do you not perceive how magnanimous they are when they swear that they have never loved before, that this is their first love? Your programme is impossible. Lady Dudley and Mme. de Mortsauf in one! Why, my dear friend, you might as well try to combine fire and water. Do you know nothing of women? They are as they are; they must have the defects of their qualities.

"You met Lady Dudley too soon to appreciate her, and the evil you say of her seems to me the revenge of your wounded vanity; you understood Mme. de Mortsauf too late; you punished each for not being the other; what then would become of me, being neither one nor the other?

"I like you well enough to have reflected very seriously on your future prospects. Your look, as of the Knight

of the Rueful Countenance, has always interested me, and I believe in the constancy of melancholy men, but I did not know that you had begun your career in the world by killing the loveliest and most virtuous of women. Well, I have been considering what remains for you to do; I have thought it out. I think you had better marry some Mrs. Shandy, who will know nothing of love or passion, who will never trouble her head about Lady Dudley or Mme. de Mortsauf, nor about those spells of dullness which you call melancholy—when you are as amusing as a rainy day—and who will be the worthy Sister of Charity you long for.

“As to love—thrilling at a word, knowing how to wait for happiness, how to give and take it, feeling the myriad storms of passion, making common cause with the little vanities of the woman you love—my dear Count, give it up. You have followed the advice of your good angel too exactly; you have avoided young women so effectually that you know nothing about them. Mme. de Mortsauf was wise in getting you to a front place at once; every woman would have been against you, and you would never have got one. It is too late now to begin your training, and to learn to say the things we like to hear, to be noble at appropriate moments, to worship our triviality when we have a fancy to be trivial. We are not such simpletons as you think us. When we love, we set the man of our choice above all else. Anything that shakes our faith in our own supremacy shakes our love. By flattering us, you flatter yourselves.

“If you want to live in the world and mingle on equal terms with women, conceal with care all you have told me; they do not care to strew the flowers of their affections on stones, or lavish their caresses to heal a wounded heart. Every woman will at once discern the shallowness of your heart, and you will be constantly more unhappy. Very few will be frank enough to tell you what I have told you, or good-natured enough to dismiss you without rancor and offer you their friendship, as she now does who still remains your sincere friend.

“NATALIE DE MANERVILLE.”

PARIS, October 1835.

## **THE VENDETTA**

[*La Vendetta*, divided into chapters, first appeared in the *Silhouette* of April 1830, but was afterward printed without chapter divisions.]

## THE VENDETTA

*Dedicated to Puttinati, Sculptor at Milan.*

**I**N the year 1800, towards the end of October, a stranger, having with him a woman and a little girl, made his appearance in front of the Tuileries Palace, and stood for some little time close to the ruins of a house, then recently pulled down, on the spot where the wing is still unfinished which was intended to join Catherine de Medici's Palace to the Louvre built by the Valois. There he stood, his arms folded, his head bent, raising it now and again to look at the Consul's Palace, or at his wife, who sat on a stone by his side.

Though the stranger seemed to think only of the little girl of nine or ten, whose black hair was a plaything in his fingers, the woman lost none of the glances shot at her by her companion. A common feeling, other than love, united these two beings, and a common thought animated their thoughts and their actions. Misery is perhaps the strongest of all bonds.

The man had one of those broad, solemn-looking heads, with a mass of hair, of which so many examples have been perpetuated by the Caracci. Among the thick black locks were many white hairs. His features, though fine and proud, had a set hardness which spoiled them. In spite of his powerful and upright frame, he seemed to be more than sixty years of age. His clothes, which were dilapidated, betrayed his foreign origin.

The woman's face, formerly handsome, but now faded, bore a stamp of deep melancholy, though, when her husband looked at her, she forced herself to smile, and affected a calm expression. The little girl was standing, in spite of the fatigue that was written on her small sunburnt face. She had Italian features, large black eyes under well-arched eyebrows, a native dignity and genuine grace. More than



one passer-by was touched by the mere sight of this group, for the persons composing it made no effort to disguise a despair evidently as deep as the expression of it was simple; but the spring of the transient kindness which distinguishes the Parisian is quickly dried up. As soon as the stranger perceived that he was the object of some idler's attention, he stared at him so fiercely that the most intrepid loungeur hastened his step, as though he had trodden on a viper.

After remaining there a long time undecided, the tall man suddenly passed his hand across his brow, driving away, so to speak, the thoughts that had furrowed it with wrinkles, and made up his mind no doubt to some desperate determination. Casting a piercing look at his wife and daughter, he drew out of his jerkin a long dagger, held it out to the woman, and said in Italian, "I am going to see whether the Bonapartes remember us."

He walked on, with a slow, confident step, towards the entrance to the palace, where, of course, he was checked by a soldier on guard, with whom there could be no long discussion. Seeing that the stranger was obstinate, the sentry pointed his bayonet at him by way of ultimatum. As chance would have it at this moment, a squad came round to relieve guard, and the corporal very civilly informed the stranger where he might find the captain of the guard.

"Let Bonaparte know that Bartolomeo di Piombo wants to see him," said the Italian to the officer.

In vain did the captain explain to Bartolomeo that it was not possible to see the First Consul without having written to him beforehand to request an audience. The stranger insisted that the officer should go to inform Bonaparte. The captain urged the rules of his duty, and formally refused to yield to the demands of this strange petitioner. Bartolomeo knit his brows, looked at the captain with a terrible scowl, and seemed to make him responsible for all the disasters his refusal might occasion; then he remained silent, his arms tightly crossed on his breast, and took his stand under the archway which connects the garden and the courtyard of the Tuileries.

People who are thoroughly bent on anything are almost

always well served by chance. At the moment when Bartolomeo sat down on one of the curbstones near the entrance to the palace, a carriage drove up, and out of it stepped Lucien Bonaparte, at that time Minister of the Interior.

"Ah! Lucien, good luck for me to have met you!" cried the stranger.

These words, spoken in the Corsican dialect, made Lucien stop at the instant when he was rushing into the vestibule; he looked at his fellow-countryman, and recognized him. At the first word that Bartolomeo said in his ear, he took him with him. Murat, Lannes, and Rapp were in the First Consul's Cabinet. On seeing Lucien come in with so strange a figure as was Piombo, the conversation ceased. Lucien took his brother's hand and led him into a window recess. After exchanging a few words, the First Consul raised his hand with a gesture, which Murat and Lannes obeyed by retiring. Rapp affected not to have seen it, and remained. Then, Bonaparte having sharply called him to order, the aid-de-camp went out with a sour face. The First Consul, who heard the sound of Rapp's steps in the neighboring room, hastily followed him, and saw him close to the wall between the cabinet and the anteroom.

"You refuse to understand me?" said the First Consul. "I wish to be alone with my countryman."

"A Corsican!" retorted the aid-de-camp. "I distrust those creatures too much not to——"

The First Consul could not help smiling, and lightly pushed his faithful officer by the shoulders.

"Well, and what are you doing here, my poor Bartolomeo?" said the First Consul to Piombo.

"I have come to ask for shelter and protection, if you are a true Corsican," replied Bartolomeo in a rough tone.

"What misfortune has driven you from your native land? You were the richest, the most——"

"I have killed all the Porta," replied the Corsican, in a hollow voice, with a frown.

The First Consul drew back a step or two, like a man astonished.

"Are you going to betray me?" cried Bartolomeo, with a gloomy look at Bonaparte. "Do you forget that there are still four of the Piombo in Corsica?"

Lucien took his fellow-countryman by the arm and shook him.

"Do you come here to threaten the savior of France?" he said vehemently.

Bonaparte made a sign to Lucien, who was silent. Then he looked at Piombo, and said, "And why did you kill all the Porta?"

"We had made friends," he replied; "the Barbanti had reconciled us. The day after we had drunk together to drown our quarrel I left, because I had business at Bastia. They stayed at my place, and set fire to my vineyard at Longone. They killed my son Gregorio; my daughter Ginevra and my wife escaped; they had taken the Communion that morning; the Virgin protected them. When I got home I could no longer see my house; I searched for it with my feet in the ashes. Suddenly I came across Gregorio's body; I recognized it in the moonlight. 'Oh, the Porta have played this trick!' said I to myself. I went off at once into the scrub; I got together a few men to whom I had done some service—do you hear, Bonaparte?—and we marched down on the Porta's vineyard. We arrived at five in the morning, and by seven they were all in the presence of God. Giacomo declares that Elisa Vanni saved a child, little Luigi; but I tied him into bed with my own hands before setting the house on fire. Then I quitted the island with my wife and daughter without being able to make sure whether Luigi Porta were still alive."

Bonaparte looked at Bartolomeo with curiosity, but no astonishment.

"How many were they?" asked Lucien.

"Seven," replied Piombo. "They persecuted you in their day," he added. The words aroused no sign of hatred in the two brothers. "Ah! you are no longer Corsicans!" cried Bartolomeo, with a sort of despair. "Good-by. Formerly I protected you," he went on reproachfully. "But for me your mother would never have reached Marseilles,"

he said, turning to Bonaparte, who stood thoughtful, his elbow resting on the chimney-piece.

"I cannot in conscience take you under my wing, Piombo," replied Napoleon. "I am the head of a great nation; I govern the Republic; I must see that the laws are carried out."

"Ah, ha!" said Bartolomeo.

"But I can shut my eyes," Bonaparte went on. "The tradition of the vendetta will hinder the reign of law in Corsica for a long time yet," he added, talking to himself. "But it must be stamped out at any cost."

He was silent for a minute, and Lucien signed to Piombo to say nothing. The Corsican shook his head from side to side with a disapproving look.

"Remain here," the First Consul said, addressing Bartolomeo. "We know nothing. I will see that your estates are purchased so as to give you at once the means of living. Then later, some time hence, we will remember you. But no more vendetta. There is no Maquis scrub here. If you play tricks with your dagger, there is no hope for you. Here the law protects everybody, and we do not do justice on our own account."

"He has put himself at the head of a strange people," replied Bartolomeo, taking Lucien's hand and pressing it. "But you recognize me in misfortune; it is a bond between us for life and death; and you may command everyone named Piombo." As he spoke, his brow cleared, and he looked about him approvingly.

"You are not badly off here," he said, with a smile, as if he would like to lodge there. "And you are dressed all in red like a cardinal."

"It rests with you to rise and have a palace in Paris," said Bonaparte, looking at him from head to foot. "It will often happen that I may look about me for a devoted friend to whom I can trust myself."

A sigh of gladness broke from Piombo's deep chest; he held out his hand to the First Consul, saying, "There is something of the Corsican in you still!"

Bonaparte smiled. He gazed in silence at this man, who

had brought him as it were a breath of air from his native land, from the island where he had formerly been so miraculously saved from the hatred of the "English party," and which he was fated never to see again. He made a sign to his brother, who led away Bartolomeo di Piombo.

Lucien inquired with interest as to the pecuniary position of the man who had once protected his family. Piombo led the Minister of the Interior to a window and showed him his wife and Ginevra, both seated on a heap of stones.

"We have come from Fontainebleau on foot," said he, "and we have not a sou."

Lucien gave his fellow-countryman his purse, and desired him to come again next morning to consult as to the means of providing for his family. The income from all Piombo's possessions in Corsica could hardly suffice to maintain him respectably in Paris.

Fifteen years elapsed between the arrival of the Piombo family in Paris and the following incidents, which, without the story of this event, would have been less intelligible.

Servin, one of our most distinguished artists, was the first to conceive the idea of opening a studio for young ladies who may wish to take lessons in painting. He was a man of over forty, of blameless habits, and wholly given up to his art; and he had married for love the daughter of a general without any fortune. At first mothers brought their daughters themselves to the professor's studio; but when they understood his high principles and appreciated the care by which he strove to deserve such confidence, they ended by sending the girls alone. It was part of the painter's scheme to take as pupils only young ladies of rich or highly respectable family, that no difficulties might arise as to the society in his studio; he had even refused to take young girls who intended to become artists, and who must necessarily have had certain kinds of training without which no mastery is possible. By degrees his prudence, the superior method by which he initiated his pupils into the secrets of his art, as well as the security their mothers felt in knowing that their daughters were in the company of well-bred girls, and in

the artist's character, manners, and marriage, won him a high reputation in the world of fashion. As soon as a young girl showed any desire to learn drawing or painting, and her mother asked advice, "Send her to Servin," was always the answer.

Thus Servin had a specialty for teaching ladies art, as Herbault had for bonnets, Leroy for dresses, and Chevet for dainties. It was acknowledged that a young woman who had taken lessons of Servin could pronounce definitively on the pictures in the Louvre, paint a portrait in a superior manner, copy an old picture, and produce her own painting of genre. Thus this artist sufficed for all the requirements of the aristocracy.

Notwithstanding his connection with all the best houses in Paris, he was independent and patriotic, preserving with all alike the light and witty tone, sometimes ironical, and the freedom of opinion which characterize painters.

He had carried his scrupulous precautions into the arrangement of the place where his scholars worked. The outer entrance to the loft above his dwelling-rooms had been walled up; to get into this retreat, as sacred as a harem, the way was up a staircase in the center of the house. This studio, which occupied the whole of the top story, was on the vast scale which always surprises inquisitive visitors when, having climbed to sixty feet above the ground, they expect to find an artist lodged in the gutter. It was a kind of gallery, abundantly lighted by immense skylights screened with the large green blinds which artists use to distribute the light. A quantity of caricatures, heads sketched in outline with a brush or the point of a palette knife, all over the dark gray walls, proved that, allowing for a difference in the expression, fine young ladies have as much whimsicality in their brain as men can have. A small stove, with a huge pipe that made amazing zigzags before reaching the upper region of the roof, was the inevitable decoration of this studio. There was a shelf all around the room, supporting plaster casts which lay there in confusion, most of them under a coating of whitish dust.

Above this shelf here and there a head of Niobe hanging

to a nail showed its pathetic bend, a Venus smiled, a hand was unexpectedly thrust out before your eyes, like a beggar's asking alms; then there were anatomical *écorchés*, yellow with smoke, and looking like limbs snatched from coffins; and pictures, drawings, lay-figures, frames without canvas, and canvases without frames, completed the effect, giving the room the characteristic aspect of a studio, a singular mixture of ornamentation and bareness, of poverty and splendor, of care and neglect.

This huge sort of hold, in which everything, even man, looks small, has a behind-the-scenes flavor; here are to be seen old linen, gilt armor, odds and ends of stuffs, and some machinery. But there is something about it as grand as thought: genius and death are there; Diana and Apollo side by side with a skull or a skeleton; beauty and disorder, poetry and reality, gorgeous coloring in shadow, and often a whole drama, but motionless and silent. How symbolical of the artist brain!

At the moment when my story begins the bright sun of July lighted up the studio, and two beams of sunshine shot across its depths, broad bands of diaphanous gold in which the dust-motes glistened. A dozen easels raised their pointed spars, looking like the masts of vessels in a harbor. Several young girls gave life to the scene by the variety of their countenances and attitudes, and the difference in their dress. The strong shadows cast by the green baize blinds, arranged to suit the position of each easel, produced a multitude of contrasts and fascinating effects of chiaroscuro.

This group of girls formed the most attractive picture in the gallery. A fair-haired girl, simply dressed, stood at some distance from her companions, working perseveringly and seeming to foresee misfortune; no one looked at her nor spoke to her; she was the prettiest, the most modest, and the least rich. Two principal groups, divided by a little space, represented two classes of society, two spirits, even in this studio, where rank and fortune ought to have been forgotten.

These young things, sitting or standing, surrounded by their paint-boxes, playing with their brushes or getting them

ready, handling their bright-tinted palettes, painting, chattering, laughing, singing, given up to their natural impulses and revealing their true characters, made up a drama unknown to men; this one proud, haughty, capricious, with black hair and beautiful hands, flashed the fire of her eyes at random; that one, light-hearted and heedless, a smile on her lips, her hair chestnut, with delicate white hands, virginal and French, a light nature without a thought of evil, living from hour to hour; another, dreamy, melancholy, pale, her head drooping like a falling blossom; her neighbor, on the contrary, tall, indolent, with Oriental manners, and long, black, melting eyes, speaking little, but lost in thought, and stealing a look at the head of Antinous.

In the midst, like the *Jocoso* of a Spanish comedy, a girl, full of wit and sparkling sallies, stood watching them all with a single glance, and making them laugh; raising a face so full of life it could not but be pretty. She was the leader of the first group of pupils, consisting of the daughters of bankers, lawyers, and merchants—all rich, but exposed to all the minute but stinging disdains freely poured out upon them by the other young girls who belonged to the aristocracy. These were governed by the daughter of a gentleman-usher to the King's private chamber, a vain little thing, as silly as she was vain, and proud of her father's having an office at Court. She aimed at seeming to understand the master's remarks at the first word, and appearing to work by inspired grace; she used an eyeglass, came very much dressed, very late, and begged her companions not to talk loud. Among this second group might be observed some exquisite shapes and distinguished-looking faces; but their looks expressed but little simplicity. Though their attitudes were elegant and their movements graceful, their faces were lacking in candor, and it was easy to perceive that they belonged to a world where politeness forms the character at an early age, and the abuse of social pleasures kills the feelings and develops selfishness. When the whole party of girl students was complete there were to be seen among them child-like heads, virgin heads of enchanting purity, faces where the parted lips showed virgin teeth, and where a virgin



smile came and went. Then the studio suggested not a seraglio, but a group of angels sitting on a cloud in heaven.

It was near noon; Servin had not yet made his appearance. For some days past he had spent most of his time at a studio he had elsewhere, finishing a picture he had there for the exhibition. Suddenly Mlle. Amélie Thirion, the head of the aristocrats in this little assembly, spoke at some length to her neighbor; there was profound silence among the patrician group; the banker faction were equally silent from astonishment, and tried to guess the subject of such a conference. But the secret of the young *ultras* was soon known. Amélie rose, took an easel that stood near her, and moved it to some distance from the "nobility," close to a clumsy partition which divided the studio from a dark closet where broken casts were kept, paintings that the professor had condemned, and, in winter, the firewood. Amélie's proceedings gave rise to a murmur of surprise which did not hinder her from completing the removal by wheeling up to the easel a stool and paint-box, in fact, everything, even a picture by Prudhon, of which a pupil, who had not yet come, was making a copy. After this *coup d'état* the party of the right painted on in silence; but the left talked it over at great length.

"What will Mlle. Piombo say?" asked one of the girls of Mlle. Mathilde Roguin, the oracle of mischief of her group.

"She is not a girl to say much," was the reply. "But fifty years hence she will remember this insult as if she had experienced it the day before, and will find some cruel means of revenge. She is a person I should not like to be at war with."

"The proscription to which those ladies have condemned her is all the more unjust," said another young girl, "because Mlle. Ginevra was very sad the day before yesterday; her father, they say, has just given up his appointment. This will add to her troubles, while she was very good to those young ladies during the Hundred Days. Did she ever say a word that could hurt them? On the contrary, she

avoided talking politics. But our *ultras* seem to be prompted by jealousy rather than by party-spirit."

"I have a great mind to fetch Mlle. Piombo's easel and place it by mine," said Mathilde Roguin. She rose, but on second thoughts she sat down again. "With a spirit like Mlle. Ginevra's," said she, "it is impossible to know how she would take our civility. Let us wait and see."

"*Eccola!*" said the black-eyed girl languidly. In fact, the sound of footsteps coming upstairs was heard in the studio. The words, "Here she comes!" passed from mouth to mouth, and then perfect silence fell.

To understand the full importance of the ostracism carried into effect by Amélie Thirion, it must be told that this scene took place towards the end of the month of July 1815. The second restoration of the Bourbons broke up many friendships which had weathered the turmoil of the first. At this time families, almost always divided among themselves, renewed many of the most deplorable scenes which tarnish the history of all countries at periods of civil or religious struggles. Children, young girls, old men, had caught the monarchical fever from which the Government was suffering. Discord flew in under the domestic roof, and suspicion dyed in gloomy hues the most intimate conversations and actions.

Ginevra di Piombo idolized Napoleon; indeed, how could she have hated him? The Emperor was her fellow-countryman, and her father's benefactor. Baron di Piombo was one of Napoleon's followers who had most efficiently worked to bring him back from Elba. Incapable of renouncing his political faith, nay, eager to proclaim it, Piombo had remained in Paris in the midst of enemies. Hence Ginevra di Piombo was ranked with the "suspicious characters," all the more so because she made no secret of the regret her family felt at the second restoration. The only tears she had perhaps ever shed in her life were wrung from her by the twofold tidings of Bonaparte's surrender on board the *Bellerophon*, and the arrest of Labédoyère.

The young ladies forming the aristocratic party in the studio belonged to the most enthusiastically Royalist families

of Paris. It would be difficult to give any idea of the exaggerated feelings of the time, and of the horror felt towards Bonapartists. However mean and trivial Amélie Thirion's conduct may seem to-day, it was then a very natural demonstration of hatred. Ginevra di Piombo, one of Servin's earliest pupils, had occupied the place of which they wished to deprive her ever since the first day she had come to the studio. The aristocratic group had gradually settled around her; and to turn her out of a place, which in a certain sense belonged to her, was not merely to insult her, but to cause her some pain, for all artists have a predilection for the spot where they work.

However, political hostility had perhaps not much to do with the conduct of this little studio party of the Right. Ginevra di Piombo, the most accomplished of Servin's pupils, was an object of the deepest jealousy. The master professed an equal admiration for the talents and the character of this favorite pupil, who served as the standard of all his comparisons; and, indeed, while it was impossible to explain the ascendancy this young girl exercised over all who were about her, she enjoyed in this small world an influence resembling that of Bonaparte over his soldiers. The aristocratic clique had, some days since, resolved on the overthrow of this queen; but as no one had been bold enough to repulse the Bonapartist, Mlle. Thirion had just struck the decisive blow so as to make her companions the accomplices of her hatred. Though Ginevra was really beloved by some of the Royalist party, who at home were abundantly lectured on politics, with the tact peculiar to women, they judged it best not to interfere in the quarrel.

On entering, Ginevra was received in perfect silence. Of all the girls who had yet appeared at Servin's studio, she was the handsomest, the tallest, and the most finely made. Her gait had a stamp of dignity and grace which commanded respect. Her face, full of intelligence, seemed radiant, it was so transfused with the animation peculiar to Corsicans, which does not exclude calmness. Her abundant hair, her eyes, and their black lashes told of passion. Though the corners of her mouth were softly drawn and her lips a little

too thick, they had the kindly expression which strong people derive from the consciousness of strength. By a singular freak of nature the charm of her features was in some sort belied by a marble forehead stamped with an almost savage pride, and the traditional habits of Corsica. That was the only bond between her and her native land; in every other detail of her person the simplicity and freedom of Lombard beauties were so bewitching, that only in her absence could anyone bear to cause her the smallest pain. She was, indeed, so attractive, that her old father, out of prudence, never allowed her to walk alone to the studio.

The only fault of this really poetic creature came of the very power of such fully developed beauty. She had refused to marry, out of affection for her father and mother, feeling herself necessary to them in their old age. Her taste for painting had taken the place of the passions which commonly agitate women.

"You are all very silent to-day," she said, after coming forward a step or two. "Good-morning, my little Laure," she added in a gentle, caressing tone, as she went up to the young girl who was painting apart from the rest. "That head is very good. The flesh is a little too pink, but it is all capitally drawn."

Laure raised her head, looked at Ginevra much touched, and their faces brightened with an expression of mutual affection. A faint smile gave life to the Italian's lips, but she seemed pensive, and went slowly to her place, carelessly glancing at the drawings and pictures, and saying good-morning to each of the girls of the first group, without observing the unusual curiosity excited by her presence. She might have been a queen amid her Court. She did not observe the deep silence that reigned among the aristocrats, and passed their camp without saying a word. Her absence of mind was so complete that she went to her easel, opened her paint-box, took out her brushes, slipped on her brown linen cuffs, tied her apron, examined her palette, all without thinking, as it seemed, of what she was doing. All the heads of the humbler group were turned to look at her. And if the young ladies of the Thirion faction were less frankly im-

patient than their companions, their side glances were nevertheless directed to Ginevra.

"She notices nothing," said Mlle. Roguin.

At this moment Ginevra, roused from the meditative attitude in which she had gazed at her canvas, turned her head towards the aristocratic party. With one glance she measured the distance that lay between them, and held her peace.

"It has not occurred to her that they meant to insult her," said Mathilde. "She has neither colored nor turned pale. How provoked those young ladies will be if she likes her new place better than the old one!"—"You are quite apart there, mademoiselle," she added louder, and addressing Ginevra.

The Italian girl affected not to hear, or perhaps she did not hear; she hastily rose, walked rather slowly along the partition which divided the dark closet from the studio, seeming to examine the skylight from which the light fell; and to this she ascribed so much importance that she got upon a chair to fasten the green baize which interfered with the light, a good deal higher. At this elevation she was on a level with a small crack in the boarding, the real object of her efforts, for the look she cast through it can only be compared with that of a miser discovering Aladdin's treasure. She quickly descended, came back to her place, arranged her picture, affected still to be dissatisfied with the light, pushed a table close to the partition, and placed a chair on it; then she nimbly mounted this scaffolding, and again peeped through the crack. She gave but one look into the closet, which was lighted by a window at the top of the partition, but what she saw impressed her so vividly that she started.

"You will fall, Mlle. Ginevra!" cried Laure.

All the girls turned to look at their imprudent companion, who was tottering. The fear of seeing them gather around her gave her courage; she recovered her strength and her balance, and dancing on the chair, she turned to Laure, and said with some agitation—

"Bah! It is at any rate safer than a throne!"

She quickly arranged the baize, came down, pushed the table and the chair far from the partition, returned to her

easel, and made a few more attempts, seeming to try for an effect of light that suited her. Her picture did not really trouble her at all; her aim was to get close to the dark closet by which she placed herself, as she wished, at the end near the door. Then she prepared to set her palette, still in perfect silence. Where she now was she soon heard more distinctly a slight noise which, on the day before, had greatly stirred her curiosity, and sent her young imagination wandering over a wide field of conjecture. She easily recognized it as the deep, regular breathing of the sleeping man whom she had just now seen. Her curiosity was satisfied, but she found herself burdened with an immense responsibility. Through the crack she had caught sight of the Imperial eagle, and on a camp bed, in the dim light, had seen the figure of an officer of the guard. She guessed it all. Servin was sheltering a refugee.

She now trembled lest one of her companions should come to examine her picture, and should hear the unfortunate man breathe, or heave too deep a sigh, such as had fallen on her ear during yesterday's lesson. She resolved to remain near the door, and trust to her wits to cheat the tricks of fate.

"I had better remain here," thought she, "to prevent some disaster, than leave the poor prisoner at the mercy of some giddy prank."

This was the secret of Ginevra's apparent indifference when she found her easel transplanted; she was secretly delighted, since she had been able to satisfy her curiosity in a natural manner; and besides, she was too much absorbed at this moment to inquire into the reason of her exclusion. Nothing is more mortifying to young girls, or, indeed, to anyone, than to see a practical joke, an insult, or a witticism fail of its effect in consequence of the victim's contempt. It would seem that our hatred of an enemy is increased by the height to which he can rise above us.

Ginevra's conduct remained a riddle to all her companions. Her friends and her foes were alike surprised, for she was allowed to have every good quality excepting forgiveness of injuries. Though the opportunities for showing this vice of temper had rarely been offered to Ginevra by the incidents of

studio life, the instances she had happened to give of her vindictive spirit and determination had none the less made a deep impression on her companions' minds. After many guesses, Mlle. Roguin finally regarded the Italian's silence as evidence of a magnanimity above all praise; and her party, inspired by her, conceived a plan to humiliate the aristocrats of the studio. They achieved their purpose by a fire of sarcasms directed at the pride and airs of the party of the Right.

Mme. Servin's arrival put an end to this contest of self-assertiveness. Amélie, with the shrewdness which is always coupled with malice, had remarked, watched, and wondered at the excessive absence of mind which hindered Ginevra from hearing the keenly polite dispute of which she was the subject. The revenge which Mlle. Roguin and her followers were wreaking on Mlle. Thirion and her party had thus the fatal effect of setting the young *Ultras* to discover the cause of Ginevra's absorbed silence. The beautiful Italian became the center of observation, and was watched by her friends as much as by her enemies. It is very difficult to hide the slightest excitement, the most trifling feeling, from fifteen idle and inquisitive girls whose mischief and wits crave only for secrets to guess, and intrigues to plot or to baffle, and who can ascribe to a gesture, to a glance, to a word, so many meanings, that they can hardly fail to discover the true one. Thus Ginevra di Piombo's secret was in great peril of being found out.

At this moment Mme. Servin's presence produced a diversion in the drama that was being obscurely played at the bottom of these young hearts; while its sentiments, its ideas, its development, were expressed by almost allegorical words, by significant looks, by gestures, and even by silence, often more emphatic than speech.

The moment Mme. Servin came into the studio her eyes turned to the door by which Ginevra was standing. Under the present circumstances this look was not lost. If at first none of the maidens observed it, Mlle. Thirion remembered it afterward, and accounted for the suspiciousness, the alarm, and mystery which gave a hunted expression to Mme. Servin's eyes.

"Mesdemoiselles," she said, "M. Servin cannot come to-

day." Then she paid some little compliment to each pupil, all of them welcoming her in the girlish, caressing way which lies as much in the voice and eyes as in actions. She immediately went to Ginevra under an impulse of uneasiness, which she vainly tried to conceal. The Italian and the painter's wife exchanged friendly nods, and then stood in silence, one painting, the other watching her paint. The officer's breathing was easily audible, but Mme. Servin could take no notice of it; and her dissimulation was so complete that Ginevra was tempted to accuse her of willful deafness. At this moment the stranger turned on the bed. The Italian girl looked Mme. Servin steadily in the face, and, without betraying the smallest agitation, the lady said, "Your copy is as fine as the original. If I had to choose, I should really be puzzled."

"M. Servin has not let his wife into the secret of this mystery," thought Ginevra, who, after answering the young wife with a gentle smile of incredulity, sang a snatch of some national canzonetta to cover any sounds the prisoner might make.

It was so unusual to hear the studious Italian sing, that all the girls looked at her in surprise. Later this incident served as evidence to the charitable supposition of hatred. Mme. Servin soon went away, and the hours of study ended without further event. Ginevra let all her companions leave, affecting to work on; but she unconsciously betrayed her wish to be alone, for as the pupils made ready to go she looked at them with ill-disguised impatience. Mlle. Thirion, who within these few hours had become a cruel foe to the young girl, who was her superior in everything, guessed by the instinct of hatred that her rival's affected industry covered a mystery. She had been struck more than once by the attention with which Ginevra seemed to be listening to a sound no one else could hear. The expression she now read in the Italian's eyes was as a flash of illumination. She was the last to leave, and went in on her way down to see Mme. Servin, with whom she stayed a few minutes. Then, pretending that she had forgotten her bag, she very softly went upstairs again to the studio, and discovered Ginevra at the top of a hastily con-



structed scaffolding, so lost in contemplation of the unknown soldier that she did not hear the light sound of her companion's footsteps. It is true that Amélie walked on eggs—to use a phrase of Walter Scott's; she retired to the door and coughed. Ginevra started, turned her head, saw her enemy, and colored; then she quickly untied the blind, to mislead her as to her purpose, and came down. After putting away her paint-box, she left the studio, carrying stamped upon her heart the image of a man's head as charming as the Endymion, Girodet's masterpiece, which she had copied a few days previously.

“So young a man, and proscribed! Who can he be?—for it is not Marshal Ney.”

These two sentences are the simplest expression of all the ideas which Ginevra turned over in her mind during two days. The next day but one, notwithstanding her hurry to be first at the painting gallery, she found that Mlle. Thirion had already come in a carriage. Ginevra and her enemy watched each other for some time, but each kept her countenance impenetrable by the other. Amélie had seen the stranger's handsome face; but happily, and at the same time unhappily, the eagles and the uniform were not within the range of her eye through the crack. She lost herself in conjecture. Suddenly Servin came in, much earlier than usual.

“Mlle. Ginevra,” said he, after casting an eye around the gallery, “why have you placed yourself there? The light is bad. Come nearer to these young ladies, and lower your blind a little.”

Then he sat down by Laure, whose work deserved his most lenient criticism.

“Well done!” he exclaimed, “this head is capitally done. You will be a second Ginevra.”

The master went from easel to easel, blaming, flattering, and jesting; and making himself, as usual, more feared for his jests than for his reproofs.

The Italian had not obeyed his wishes; she remained at her post with the firm intention of staying there. She took out a sheet of paper and began to sketch in sepia the head of the unhappy refugee. A work conceived of with passion

always bears a particular stamp. The faculty of giving truth to a rendering of nature or of a thought constitutes genius, and passion can often take its place. Thus in the circumstances in which Ginevra found herself, either the intuition she owed to her memory, which had been deeply struck, or perhaps necessity, the mother of greatness, lent her a supernatural flash of talent. The officer's head was thrown off on the paper with an inward trembling that she ascribed to fear, and which a physiologist would have recognized as the fever of inspiration. From time to time she stole a furtive glance at her companions, so as to be able to hide the sketch in case of any indiscretion on their part. But in spite of her sharp lookout, there was a moment when she failed to perceive that her relentless enemy, under the shelter of a huge portfolio, had turned her eyeglass on the mysterious drawing. Mlle. Thirion, recognizing the refugee's features, raised her head suddenly, and Ginevra slipped away the sheet of paper.

"Why do you stay there, in spite of my opinion, *mademoiselle*?" the professor gravely asked Ginevra.

The girl hastily turned her easel so that no one could see her sketch, and said, in an agitated voice, as she showed it to her master—

"Don't you think with me that this is a better light? May I not stay where I am?"

Servin turned pale. As nothing can escape the keen eyes of hatred, Mlle. Thirion threw herself, so to speak, into the excited feelings that agitated the professor and his pupil.

"You are right," said Servin. "But you will soon know more than I do," he added, with a forced laugh. There was a silence, during which the master looked at the head of the officer. "This is a masterpiece, worthy of Salvator Rosa!" he exclaimed, with an artist's vehemence.

At this exclamation all the young people rose, and Mlle. Thirion came forward with the swiftness of a tiger springing on its prey. At this instant the prisoner, roused by the turmoil, woke up. Ginevra overset her stool, spoke a few incoherent sentences, and began to laugh; but she had folded the portrait in half and thrown it into a portfolio before

her terrible enemy could see it. The girls crowded round the easel; Servin enlarged in a loud voice on the beauties of the copy on which his favorite pupil was just now engaged; and all the party were cheated by this stratagem, excepting Amélie, who placed herself behind her companions and tried to open the portfolio into which she had seen the sketch put. Ginevra seized it and set it in front of her without a word, and the two girls gazed at each other in silence.

"Come, young ladies, to your places!" said Servin. "If you want to know as much as Mlle. di Piombo, you must not be always talking of fashions and balls, and trifling so much."

When the girls had all returned to their easels, the master sat down by Ginevra.

"Was it not better that this mystery should be discovered by me than by anyone else?" said the Italian girl in a low tone.

"Yes," answered the painter. "You are patriotic; but even if you had not been, you are still the person to whom I should intrust it."

The master and pupil understood each other, and Ginevra was not now afraid to ask, "Who is he?"

"An intimate friend of Labédoyère's; the man who, next to the unfortunate colonel, did most to effect a junction between the 7th and the Grenadiers of Elba. He was a major in the Guards, and has just come back from Waterloo."

"Why have you not burnt his uniform and shako, and put him into civilian dress?" asked Ginevra vehemently.

"Some clothes are to be brought for him this evening."

"You should have shut up the studio for a few days."

"He is going away."

"Does he wish to die?" said the girl. "Let him stay with you during these first days of the storm. Paris is the only place in France where a man may be safely hidden. Is he a friend of yours?" she added.

"No. He has no claim to my regard but his misfortunes. This is how he fell into my hands; my father-in-law, who had rejoined his regiment during this campaign, met the poor young man, and saved him very cleverly from those

who have arrested Labédoyère. He wanted to defend him, like a madman!"

"And do you call him so!" cried Ginevra, with a glance of surprise at the painter, who did not speak for a moment.

"My father-in-law is too closely watched to be able to keep anyone in his house," he went on. "He brought him here by night last week. I hoped to hide him from every eye by keeping him in this corner, the only place in the house where he can be safe."

"If I can be of any use, command me," said Ginevra. "I know Marshal Feltre."

"Well, we shall see," replied the painter.

This conversation had lasted too long not to be remarked by all the other pupils. Servin left Ginevra, came back to each easel, and gave such long lessons that he was still upstairs when the clock struck the hour at which his pupils usually left.

"You have forgotten your bag, mademoiselle," cried the professor, running after the young lady, who condescended to act the spy to gratify her hatred.

The inquisitive pupil came back for the bag, expressing some surprise at her own carelessness; but Servin's attention was to her additional proof of the existence of a mystery which was undoubtedly a serious one. She had already planned what should follow, and could say, like the Abbé Vertot, "I have laid my siege." She ran downstairs noisily, and violently slammed the door leading to Servin's rooms, that it might be supposed she had gone out; but she softly went upstairs again, and hid behind the door of the studio.

When the painter and Ginevra supposed themselves alone, he tapped in a particular manner at the door of the attic, which at once opened on its rusty, creaking hinges. The Italian girl saw a tall and well-built youth, whose Imperial uniform set her heart beating. The officer carried his arm in a sling, and his pale face told of acute suffering. He started at seeing her, a stranger. Amélie, who could see nothing, was afraid to stay any longer; but she had heard the creaking of the door, and that was enough. She silently stole away.

"Fear nothing," said the painter. "Mademoiselle is the daughter of the Emperor's most faithful friend, the Baron di Piombo."

The young officer felt no doubt of Ginevra's loyalty when once he had looked at her.

"You are wounded?" she said.

"Oh, it is nothing, mademoiselle; the cut is healing."

At this moment the shrill and piercing tones of men in the street came up to the studio, crying out, "This is the sentence which condemns to death——" All three shuddered. The soldier was the first to hear a name at which he turned pale.

"Labédoyère!" he exclaimed, dropping on to a stool.

They looked at each other in silence. Drops of sweat gathered on the young man's livid brow; with a gesture of despair he clutched the black curls of his hair, resting his elbow on Ginevra's easel.

"After all," said he, starting to his feet, "Labédoyère and I knew what we were doing. We knew the fate that awaited us if we triumphed or if we failed. He is dying for the cause, while I am in hiding——"

He hurried towards the studio door; but Ginevra, more nimble than he, rushed forward and stopped the way.

"Can you restore the Emperor?" she said. "Do you think you can raise the giant again, when he could not keep his feet?"

"What then is to become of me?" said the refugee, addressing the two friends whom chance had sent him. "I have not a relation in the world; Labédoyère was my friend and protector, I am now alone; to-morrow I shall be exiled or condemned; I have never had any fortune but my pay; I spent my last crown-piece to come and snatch Labédoyère from death and get him away. Death is an obvious necessity to me. When a man is determined to die, he must know how to sell his head to the executioner. I was thinking just now that an honest man's life is well worth that of two traitors, and that a dagger-thrust, judiciously placed, may give one immortality."

This passion of despair frightened the painter, and even

Ginevra, who fully understood the young man. 'The Italian admired the beautiful head and the delightful voice, of which the accents of rage scarcely disguised the sweetness; then she suddenly dropped balm on all the hapless man's wounds.

"Monsieur!" said she, "as to your pecuniary difficulties, allow me to offer you the money I myself have saved. My father is rich; I am his only child; he loves me, and I am quite sure he will not blame me. Have no scruples in accepting it; our wealth comes from the Emperor, we have nothing which is not the bounty of his munificence. Is it not gratitude to help one of his faithful soldiers? So take this money with as little ceremony as I make about offering it. It is only money," she added in a scornful tone. "Then, as to friends—you will find friends!" And she proudly raised her head, while her eyes shone with unwonted brilliancy. "The head which must fall to-morrow—the mark of a dozen guns—saves yours," she went on. "Wait till this storm is over, and you can take service in a foreign land if you are not forgotten, or in the French army if you are."

In the comfort offered by a woman there is a delicacy of feeling which always has a touch of something motherly, something far-seeing and complete; but when such words of peace and hope are seconded by grace of gesture, and the eloquence which comes from the heart, above all, when the comforter is beautiful, it is hard for a young man to resist. The young colonel inhaled love by every sense. A faint flush tinged his white cheeks, and his eyes lost a little of the melancholy that dimmed them as he said, in a strange tone of voice, "You are an angel of goodness!—But, Labédoyère!" he added, "Labédoyère!"

At this cry they all three looked at each other, speechless, and understood each other. They were friends, not of twenty minutes, but of twenty years.

"My dear fellow," said Servin, "can you save him?"

"I can avenge him."

Ginevra was thrilled. Though the stranger was handsome, his appearance had not moved her. The gentle pity that women find in their heart for suffering which is not ignoble had, in Ginevra, stifled every other emotion; but to hear a

cry of revenge, to find in this fugitive an Italian soul and Corsican magnanimity! This was too much for her; she gazed at the officer with respectful emotion, which powerfully stirred her heart. It was the first time a man had ever made her feel so strongly. Like all women, it pleased her to imagine that the soul of this stranger must be in harmony with the remarkable beauty of his features and the fine proportions of his figure, which she admired as an artist. Led by chance curiosity to pity, from pity to eager interest, she now from interest had reached sensations so strong and deep that she thought it rash to remain there any longer.

"Till to-morrow," she said, leaving her sweetest smile with the officer, to console him.

As he saw that smile, which threw a new light, as it were, on Ginevra's face, the stranger for a moment forgot all else.

"To-morrow," he repeated sadly. "To-morrow, Labédoyère——"

Ginevra turned to him and laid a finger on her lips, looking at him as though she would say, "Be calm, be prudent."

Then the young man exclaimed: "*O Dio! Chi non vorrè vivere dopo averla veduta!*" "O God! who would not live after having seen her!" The peculiar accent with which he spoke the words startled Ginevra.

"You are a Corsican!" she exclaimed, coming back to him, her heart beating with gladness.

"I was born in Corsica," he replied; "but I was taken to Genoa when very young; and, as soon as I was of an age to enter the army, I enlisted."

The stranger's handsome person, the transcendent charm he derived from his attachment to the Emperor, his wound, his misfortunes, even his danger, all vanished before Ginevra's eyes, or rather all were fused in one new and exquisite sentiment. This refugee was a son of Corsica, and spoke its beloved tongue. In a minute the girl stood motionless, spell-bound by a magical sensation. She saw before her eyes a living picture to which a combination of human feeling and chance lent dazzling hues. At Servin's invitation the officer had taken his seat on an ottoman, the painter had untied the string which supported his guest's arm, and was now undoing

the bandages in order to dress the wound. Ginevra shuddered as she saw the long wide gash, made by a saber-cut, on the young man's forearm, and gave a little groan. The stranger looked up at her and began to smile. There was something very touching that went to the soul in Servin's attentive care as he removed the lint and touched the tender flesh, while the wounded man's face, though pale and sickly, expressed pleasure rather than suffering as he looked at the young girl.

An artist could not help admiring the antithesis of sentiments, and the contrast of color between the whiteness of the linen and the bare arm and the officer's blue and red coat. Soft dusk had now fallen on the studio, but a last sunbeam shone in on the spot where the refugee was sitting, in such a way that his pale, noble face, his black hair, his uniform were all flooded with light. This simple effect the superstitious Italian took for an omen of good luck. The stranger seemed to her a celestial messenger who had spoken to her in the language of her native land, and put her under the spell of childish memories; while in her heart a feeling had birth as fresh and pure as her first age of innocence. In a very short instant she stood pensive, lost in infinite thought; then she blushed to have betrayed her absence of mind, exchanged a swift, sweet look with the officer, and made her escape, seeing him still.

The next day there was no painting lesson; Ginevra could come to the studio, and the prisoner could be with his fellow-countrywoman. Servin, who had a sketch to finish, allowed the officer to sit there while he played guardian to the two young people, who frequently spoke in Corsican. The poor soldier told of his sufferings during the retreat from Moscow; for, at the age of nineteen, he had found himself at the passage of the Beresina, alone of all his regiment, having lost in his comrades the only men who could care for him, an orphan. He described, in words of fire, the great disaster of Waterloo.

His voice was music to the Italian girl. Brought up in Corsican ways, Ginevra was, to some extent, a child of nature; falsehood was unknown to her, and she gave herself



up without disguise to her impressions, owning them, or rather letting them be seen without the trickery, the mean and calculating vanity of the Parisian girl. During this day she remained more than once, her palette in one hand, a brush in the other, while the brush was undipped in the colors on the palette; her eyes fixed on the officer's face, her lips slightly parted, she sat listening, ready to lay on the touch which was not given. She was not surprised to find such sweetness in the young man's eyes, for she felt her own soften in spite of her determination to keep them severe and cold. Thus, for hours, she painted with resolute attention, not raising her head because he was there watching her work. The first time he sat down to gaze at her in silence, she said to him in an agitated voice, after a long pause, "Does it amuse you, then, to look on at painting?"

That day she learnt that his name was Luigi. Before they parted it was agreed that if any important political events should occur on the days when the studio was open, Ginevra was to inform him by singing in an undertone certain Italian airs.

On the following day Mlle. Thirion informed all her companions, as a great secret, that Ginevra di Piombo had a lover—a young man who came during the hours devoted to lessons—to hide in the dark closet of the studio.

"You, who take her part," said she to Mlle. Roguin, "watch her well, and you will see how she spends her time."

So Ginevra was watched with diabolical vigilance. Her songs were listened to, her glances spied. At moments when she believed that no one saw her, a dozen eyes were incessantly centered on her. And being forewarned, the girls interpreted in their true sense the agitations which passed across the Italian's radiant face, and her snatches of song, and the attention with which she listened to the muffled sounds which she alone could hear through the partition.

By the end of a week, only Laure, of the fifteen students, had resisted the temptation to scrutinize Louis through the crack in the panel, or, by an instinct of weakness, still defended the beautiful Corsican girl. Mlle. Roguin wanted to make her wait on the stairs at the hour when they all

left, to prove to her the intimacy between Ginevra and the handsome young man, by finding them together; but she refused to condescend to an espionage which curiosity could not justify, and thus became an object of general reprobation.

Erelong the daughter of the gentleman-usher thought it unbecoming in her to work in the studio of a painter whose opinions were tainted with patriotism or Bonapartism—which at that time were regarded as one and the same thing; so she came no more to Servin's. Though Amélie forgot Ginevra, the evil she had sown bore fruit. Insensibly, by chance, for gossip, or out of prudery, the other damsels informed their mothers of the strange adventure in progress at the studio. One day Mathilde Roguin did not come; the next time another was absent; at last the three or four pupils, who had still remained, came no more. Ginevra and her little friend, Mlle. Laure, were for two or three days the sole occupants of the deserted studio.

The Italian did not observe the isolation in which she was left, and did not even wonder at the cause of her companions' absence. Having devised the means of communicating with Louis, she lived in the studio as in a delightful retreat, secluded in the midst of the world, thinking only of the officer, and of the dangers which threatened him. This young creature, though sincerely admiring those noble characters who would not be false to their political faith, urged Louis to submit at once to royal authority, in order to keep him in France, while Louis refused to submit, that he might not have to leave his hiding-place.

If, indeed, passions only have their birth and grow up under the influence of romantic causes, never had so many circumstances concurred to link two beings by one feeling. Ginevra's regard for Louis, and his for her, thus made greater progress in a month than a fashionable friendship can make in ten years in a drawing-room. Is not adversity the touchstone of character? Hence Ginevra could really appreciate Louis, and know him, and they soon felt a reciprocal esteem. Ginevra, who was older than Louis, found it sweet to be courted by a young man already so great, so tried by fortune, who united the experience of a man

with the graces of youth. Louis, on his part, felt unspeakable delight in allowing himself to be apparently protected by a girl of five-and-twenty. Was it not a proof of love? The union in Ginevra of pride and sweetness, of strength and weakness, had an irresistible charm; Louis was indeed completely her slave. In short, they were already so deeply in love, that they felt no need either to deny it to themselves, nor to tell it.

One day, towards evening, Ginevra heard the signal agreed on—Louis tapped on the woodwork with a pin, so gently as to make no more noise than a spider attaching its thread—thus asking if he might come out. She glanced round the studio, did not see little Laure, and answered the summons; but as the door was opened, Louis caught sight of the girl, and hastily retreated. Ginevra, much surprised, looked about her, saw Laure, and going up to her easel, said, "You are staying very late, dear. And that head seems to me finished; there is only a reflected light to put in on that lock of hair."

"It would be very kind of you," said Laure, in a tremulous voice, "if you would correct this copy for me; I should have something of your doing to keep."

"Of course I will," said Ginevra, sure of thus dismissing her. "I thought," she added, as she put in a few light touches, "that you had a long way to go home from the studio."

"Oh! Ginevra, I am going away for good," cried the girl, sadly.

"You are leaving M. Servin?" asked the Italian, not seeming affected by her words, as she would have been a month since.

"Have you not noticed, Ginevra, that for some time there has been nobody here but you and me?"

"It is true," replied Ginevra, suddenly struck as by a reminiscence. "Are they ill, or going to be married, or are all their fathers employed now at the palace?"

"They have all left M. Servin," said Laure.

"And why?"

"On your account, Ginevra."

"Mine!" repeated the Corsican, rising, with a threatening brow, and a proud sparkle in her eyes.

"Oh, do not be angry, dear Ginevra," Laure piteously exclaimed. "But my mother wishes that I should leave too. All the young ladies said that you had an intrigue; that M. Servin had lent himself to allowing a young man who loves you to stay in the dark closet; but I never believed these calumnies, and did not tell my mother. Last evening Mme. Roguin met my mother at a ball, and asked her whether she still sent me here. When mamma said Yes, she repeated all those girls' tales. Mamma scolded me well; she declared I must have known it all, and that I had failed in the confidence of a daughter in her mother by not telling her. Oh, my dear Ginevra, I, who always took you for my model, how grieved I am not to be allowed to stay on with you——"

"We shall meet again in the world; young women get married," said Ginevra.

"When they are rich," replied Laure.

"Come to see me, my father has wealth——"

"Ginevra," Laure went on, much moved, "Mme. Roguin and my mother are coming to-morrow to see M. Servin, and complain of his conduct. At least let him be prepared."

A thunderbolt falling at her feet would have astonished Ginevra less than this announcement.

"What could it matter to them?" she innocently asked.

"Everyone thinks it very wrong. Mamma says it is quite improper."

"And you, Laure, what do you think about it?"

The girl looked at Ginevra and their hearts met. Laure could no longer restrain her tears; she threw herself on her friend's neck and kissed her. At this moment Servin came in.

"Mlle. Ginevra," he said, enthusiastically, "I have finished my picture, it is being varnished.—But what is the matter? All the young ladies are making holiday, it would seem, or are gone into the country."

Laure wiped away her tears, took leave of Servin, and went away.

"The studio has been deserted for some days," said Ginevra, "and those young ladies will return no more."

"Pooh!"

"Nay, do not laugh," said Ginevra, "listen to me. I am the involuntary cause of your loss of repute."

The artist smiled, and said, interrupting his pupil, "My repute? But in a few days my picture will be exhibited."

"It is not your talent that is in question," said the Italian girl; "but your morality. The young ladies have spread a report that Louis is shut up here, and that you—lent yourself to our love-making."

"There is some truth in that, mademoiselle," replied the professor. "The girls' mothers are airified prudes," he went on. "If they had but come to me, everything would have been explained. But what do I care for such things? Life is too short!"

And the painter snapped his fingers in the air.

Louis, who had heard part of the conversation, came out of his cupboard.

"You are losing all your pupils," he cried, "and I shall have been your ruin!"

The artist took his hand and Ginevra's, and joined them. "Will you marry each other, my children?" he asked, with touching bluntness. They both looked down, and their silence was their first mutual confession of love. "Well," said Servin, "and you will be happy, will you not? Can anything purchase such happiness as that of two beings like you?"

"I am rich," said Ginevra; "if you will allow me to indemnify you——"

"Indemnify!" Servin broke in. "Why, as soon as it is known that I have been the victim of a few little fools, and that I have sheltered a fugitive, all the Liberals in Paris will send me their daughters! Perhaps I shall be in your debt then."

Louis grasped his protector's hand, unable to speak a word; but at last he said, in a broken voice, "To you I shall owe all my happiness."

"Be happy; I unite you," said the painter with comic unction, laying his hands on the heads of the lovers.

This pleasantry put an end to their emotional mood. They looked at each other, and all three laughed. The Italian girl wrung Louis's hand with a passionate grasp, and with a simple impulse worthy of her Corsican traditions.

"Ah, but, my dear children," said Servin, "you fancy that now everything will go on swimmingly? Well, you are mistaken." They looked at him in amazement.

"Do not be alarmed; I am the only person inconvenienced by your giddy behavior. But Mme. Servin is the pink of propriety, and I really do not know how we shall settle matters with her."

"Heavens! I had forgotten. To-morrow Mme. Roguin and Laure's mother are coming to you——"

"I understand!" said the painter, interrupting her.

"But you can justify yourself," said the girl, with a toss of her head of emphatic pride. "M. Louis," and she turned to him with an arch look, "has surely no longer an antipathy for the King's Government?—Well, then," she went on, after seeing him smile, "to-morrow morning I shall address a petition to one of the most influential persons at the Ministry of War, a man who can refuse the Baron di Piombo's daughter nothing. We will obtain a tacit pardon for Captain Louis—for *they* will not recognize your grade as colonel. And you," she added, speaking to Servin, "may annihilate the mammas of my charitable young companions by simply telling them the truth."

"You are an angel!" said Servin.

While this scene was going on at the studio, Ginevra's father and mother were impatiently expecting her return.

"It is six o'clock, and Ginevra is not yet home," said Bartolomeo.

"She was never so late before," replied his wife.

The old people look at each other with all the signs of very unusual anxiety. Bartolomeo, too much excited to sit still, rose and paced the room twice, briskly enough for a man of seventy-seven. Thanks to a strong constitution, he had changed but little since the day of his arrival at Paris, and tall as he was, he was still upright. His hair, thin and white now, had left his head bald, a broad and bossy skull

which gave token of great strength and firmness. His face, deeply furrowed, had grown full and wide, with the pale complexion that inspires veneration. The fires of a passionate nature still lurked in the unearthly glow of his eyes, and the brows, which were not quite white, preserved their terrible mobility. The aspect of the man was severe, but it could be seen that Bartolomeo had the right to be so. His kindness and gentleness were known only to his wife and daughter. In his official position, or before strangers, he never set aside the majesty which time had lent to his appearance; and his habit of knitting those thick brows, of setting every line in his face, and assuming a Napoleonic fixity of gaze, made him seem as cold as marble.

In the course of his political life he had been so generally feared that he was thought unsociable; but it is not difficult to find the causes of such a reputation. Piombo's life, habits, and fidelity were a censure on most of the courtiers. Notwithstanding the secret missions intrusted to his discretion, which to any other man would have proved lucrative, he had not more than thirty thousand francs a year in Government securities. And when we consider the low price of stock under the Empire, and Napoleon's liberality to those of his faithful adherents who knew how to ask, it is easy to perceive that the Baron di Piombo was a man of stern honesty; he owed his Baron's plumage only to the necessity of bearing a title when sent by Napoleon to a foreign Court.

Bartolomeo had always professed implacable hatred of the traitors whom Napoleon had gathered about him, believing he could win them over by his victories. It was he—who took three steps towards the door of the Emperor's room, after advising him to get rid of three men then in France, on the day before he set out on his famous and brilliant campaign of 1814. Since the second return of the Bourbons, Bartolomeo had ceased to wear the ribbon of the Legion of Honor. No man ever offered a finer image of the old Republicans, the incorruptible supporters of the Empire, who survived as the living derelicts of the two most vigorous Governments the world has perhaps ever seen. If Baron di Piombo had displeased some courtiers, Daru,

Drouot, Carnot were his friends. And, indeed, since Waterloo, he cared no more about other political figures than for the puffs of smoke he blew from his cigar.

With the moderate sum which *Madame*, Napoleon's mother, had paid him for his estates in Corsica, Bartolomeo di Piombo had acquired the old Hôtel de Portenduère, in which he made no alterations. Living almost always in official residences at the cost of the Government, he had resided in this mansion only since the catastrophe of Fontainebleau. Like all simple folks of lofty character, the Baron and his wife cared nothing for external splendor; they still used the old furniture they had found in the house. The reception rooms of this dwelling, lofty, gloomy, and bare, the huge mirrors set in old gilt frames almost black with age, the furniture from the time of Louis XIV., were in keeping with Bartolomeo and his wife—figures worthy of antiquity. Under the Empire, and during the Hundred Days, while holding offices that brought handsome salaries, the old Corsican had kept house in grand style, but rather to do honor to his position than with a view to display.

His life, and that of his wife and daughter, were so frugal, so quiet, that their modest fortune sufficed for their needs. To them their child Ginevra outweighed all the riches on earth. And when, in May 1814, Baron di Piombo resigned his place, dismissed his household, and locked his stable-doors, Ginevra, as simple and unpretentious as her parents, had not a regret. Like all great souls, she found luxury in strength of feeling, as she sought happiness in solitude and work.

And these three loved each other too much for the externals of life to have any value in their eyes. Often—and especially since Napoleon's second and fearful fall—Bartolomeo and his wife spent evenings of pure delight in listening to Ginevra as she played the piano or sang. To them there was an immense mystery of pleasure in their daughter's presence, in her lightest word; they followed her with their eyes with tender solicitude; they heard her step in the courtyard, however lightly she trod. Like lovers, they would all three sit silent for hours, hearing, better than in words, the



eloquence of each other's soul. This deep feeling, the very life of the two old people, filled all their thoughts. Not three lives were here, but one, which, like the flame on a hearth, burnt up in three tongues of fire.

Though now and then memories of Napoleon's bounty and misfortunes, or the politics of the day, took the place of their constant preoccupation, they could talk of them without breaking their community of thought. For did not Ginevra share their political passions? What could be more natural than the eagerness with which they withdrew into the heart of their only child? Until now the business of public life had absorbed Baron di Piombo's energies; but in resigning office the Corsican felt the need of throwing his energy into the last feeling that was left to him; and, besides the tie that bound a father and mother to their daughter, there was perhaps, unknown to these three despotic spirits, a powerful reason in the fanaticism of their reciprocal devotion; their love was undivided; Ginevra's whole heart was given to her father, as Piombo's was to her; and certainly, if it is true that we are more closely attached to one another by our faults than by our good qualities, Ginevra responded wonderfully to all her father's passions. Herein lay the single defect of this threefold existence. Ginevra was wholly given over to her vindictive impulses, carried away by them, as Bartolomeo had been in his youth. The Corsican delighted in encouraging these savage emotions in his daughter's heart, exactly as a lion teaches his whelps to spring on their prey. But as this apprenticeship to revenge could only be carried out under the parental roof, Ginevra never forgave her father anything; he always had to succumb. Piombo regarded these factitious quarrels as mere childishness, but the child thus acquired a habit of domineering over her parents. In the midst of these tempests which Bartolomeo loved to raise, a tender word, a look, was enough to soothe their angry spirits, and they were never so near kissing as when threatening wrath.

However, from the age of about five, Ginevra, growing wiser than her father, constantly avoided these scenes. Her faithful nature, her devotion, the affection which governed

all her thoughts, and her admirable good sense, had got the better of her rages; still a great evil had resulted: Ginevra lived with her father and mother on a footing of equality which is always disastrous.

To complete the picture of all the changes that had happened to these three persons since their arrival in Paris, Piombo and his wife, people of no education, had allowed Ginevra to study as she would. Following her girlish fancy, she had tried and given up everything, returning to each idea, and abandoning each in turn, until painting had become her ruling passion; she would have been perfect if her mother had been capable of directing her studies, of enlightening and harmonizing her natural gifts. Her faults were the outcome of the pernicious training that the old Corsican had delighted to give her.

After making the floor creak for some minutes under his feet, the old man rang the bell. A servant appeared.

"Go to meet Mlle. Ginevra," said the master.

"I have always been sorry that we have no longer a carriage for her," said the Baroness.

"She would not have one," replied Piombo, looking at his wife; and she, accustomed for twenty years to obedience as her part, cast down her eyes.

Tall, thin, pale, and wrinkled, and now past seventy, the Baroness was exactly like the old woman whom Schnetz introduces into the Italian scenes of his genre pictures; she commonly sat so silent that she might have been taken for a second Mrs. Shandy; but a word, a look, a gesture would betray that her feelings had all the vigor and freshness of youth. Her dress, devoid of smartness, was often devoid of taste. She usually remained passive, sunk in an armchair, like a Sultan, a *valideh*, waiting for, or admiring Ginevra—her pride and life. Her daughter's beauty, dress, and grace seemed to have become her own. All was well with her if Ginevra were content. Her hair had turned white, and a few locks were visible above her furrowed brow, and at the side of her withered cheeks.

"For about a fortnight now," said she, "Ginevra has been coming in late."

"Jean will not go fast enough," cried the impatient old man, crossing over the breast of his blue coat; he snatched up his hat, crammed it on to his head, and was off.

"You will not get far," his wife called after him.

In fact, the outer gate opened and shut, and the old mother heard Ginevra's steps in the courtyard. Bartolomeo suddenly reappeared, carrying his daughter in triumph, while she struggled in his arms.

"Here she is! La Ginevra, la Ginevrettina, la Ginevrina, la Ginevrola, la Ginevretta, la Ginevra bella!"

"Father! you are hurting me!"

Ginevra was immediately set down with a sort of respect. She nodded her head with a graceful gesture to reassure her mother, who was alarmed, and to convey that it had been only an excuse. Then the Baroness's pale, dull face regained a little color, and even a kind of cheerfulness. Piombo rubbed his hands together extremely hard—the most certain symptom of gladness; he had acquired the habit at Court when seeing Napoleon in a rage with any of his generals or ministers who served him ill, or who had committed some blunder. When once the muscles of his face were relaxed, the smallest line in his forehead expressed benevolence. These two old folks at this moment were exactly like drooping plants, which are restored to life by a little water after a long drought.

"Dinner, dinner!" cried the Baron, holding out his hand to Ginevra, whom he addressed as Signora Piombellina, another token of good spirits, to which his daughter replied with a smile.

"By the way," said Piombo, as they rose from table, "do you know that your mother has remarked that for a month past you have stayed at the studio much later than usual? Painting before parents, it would seem."

"Oh, dear father——"

"Ginevra is preparing some surprise for us, no doubt," said the mother.

"You are going to bring me a picture of your painting?" cried the Corsican, clapping his hands.

"Yes; I am very busy at the studio," she replied.

"What ails you, Ginevra? you are so pale," asked her mother.

"No!" exclaimed the girl, with a resolute gesture. "No! it shall never be said that Ginevra Piombo ever told a lie in her life."

On hearing this strange exclamation, Piombo and his wife looked at their daughter with surprise.

"I love a young man," she added, in a broken voice. Then, not daring to look at her parents, her heavy eyelids drooped as if to veil the fire in her eyes.

"Is he a prince?" asked her father ironically; but his tone of voice made both the mother and daughter tremble.

"No, father," she modestly replied, "he is a young man of no fortune——"

"Then is he so handsome?"

"He is unfortunate."

"What is he?"

"As a comrade of Labédoyère's he was outlawed, homeless; Servin hid him, and——"

"Servin is a good fellow, and did well," cried Piombo. "But you, daughter, have done ill to love any man but your father——"

"Love is not within my control," said Ginevra gently.

"I had flattered myself," said her father, "that my Ginevra would be faithful to me till my death; that my care and her mother's would be all she would have known; that our tenderness would never meet with a rival affection in her heart; that——"

"Did I ever reproach you for your fanatical devotion to Napoleon?" said Ginevra. "Have you never loved anyone but me? Have you not been away on embassies for months at a time? Have I not borne your absence bravely? Life has necessities to which we must yield."

"Ginevra!"

"No, you do not love me for my own sake, and your reproaches show intolerable selfishness."

"And you accuse your father's love!" cried Piombo with flaming looks.

"Father, I will never accuse you," replied Ginevra, more

gently than her trembling mother expected. "You have right on the side of your egoism, as I have right on the side of my love. Heaven is my witness that no daughter ever better fulfilled her duty to her parents: I have never known anything but love and happiness in what many daughters regard as obligations. Now, for fifteen years, I have never been anywhere but under your protecting wing, and it has been a very sweet delight to me to charm your lives. But am I then ungrateful in giving myself up to the joy of loving, and in wishing for a husband to protect me after you?"

"So you balance accounts with your father, Ginevra!" said the old man in ominous tones.

There was a frightful pause; no one dared to speak. Finally, Bartolomeo broke the silence by exclaiming in a heartrending voice: "Oh, stay with us; stay with your old father! I could not bear to see you love a man. Ginevra, you will not have long to wait for your liberty——"

"But, my dear father, consider; we shall not leave you, we shall be two to love you; you will know the man to whose care you will bequeath me. You will be doubly loved by me and by him—by him, being part of me, and by me who am wholly he."

"Oh, Ginevra, Ginevra!" cried the Corsican, clinching his fists, "why were you not married when Napoleon had accustomed me to the idea, and introduced dukes and counts as your suitors."

"They only loved me to order," said the young girl. "Besides, I did not wish to leave you; and they would have taken me away with them."

"You do not wish to leave us alone," said Piombo, "but if you marry you isolate us. I know you, my child, you will love us no more. Elisa," he added, turning to his wife, who sat motionless and, as it were, stupefied; "we no longer have a daughter; she wants to be married."

The old man sat down, after raising his hands in the air as though to invoke God; then he remained bent, crushed by his grief. Ginevra saw her father's agitation, and the moderation of his wrath pierced her to the heart; she had

expected a scene and furies; she had not steeled her soul against his gentleness.

"My dear father," she said in an appealing voice, "no, you shall never be abandoned by your Ginevra. But love me too a little for myself. If only you knew how he loves me! Ah, he could never bear to cause me pain!"

"What, comparisons already!" cried Piombo in a terrible voice. "No," he went on, "I cannot endure the idea. If he were to love you as you deserve, he would kill me; and if he were not to love you, I should stab him!"

Piombo's hands were trembling, his lips trembled, his whole frame trembled, and his eyes flashed lightnings; Ginevra alone could meet his gaze; for then her eyes too flashed fire, and the daughter was worthy of the father.

"To love you! What man is worthy of such a life?" he went on. "To love you as a father even—is it not to live in paradise? Who then could be worthy to be your husband?"

"He," said Ginevra. "He of whom I feel myself unworthy."

"He," echoed Piombo mechanically. "Who? He?"

"The man I love."

"Can he know you well enough already to adore you?"

"But, father," said Ginevra, feeling a surge of impatience, "even if he did not love me—so long as I love him——"

"You do love him then?" cried Piombo. Ginevra gently bowed her head. "You love him more than you love me?"

"The two feelings cannot be compared," she replied.

"One is stronger than the other?" said Piombo.

"Yes, I think so," said Ginevra.

"You shall not marry him!" cried the Corsican in a voice that made the windows rattle.

"I will marry him!" replied Ginevra calmly.

"Good God!" cried the mother, "how will this quarrel end? *Santa Virginia*, come between them!"

The Baron, who was striding up and down the room, came and seated himself. An icy sternness darkened his face; he looked steadfastly at his daughter, and said in a gentle and affectionate voice, "Nay, Ginevra—you will not marry

him. Oh, do not say you will, this evening. Let me believe that you will not. Do you wish to see your father on his knees before you, and his white hairs humbled. I will beseech you——”

“Ginevra Piombo is not accustomed to promise and not to keep her word,” said she; “I am your child.”

“She is right,” said the Baroness, “we come into the world to marry.”

“And so you encourage her in disobedience,” said the Baron to his wife, who, stricken by the reproof, froze into a statue.

“It is not disobedience to refuse to yield to an unjust command,” replied Ginevra.

“It cannot be unjust when it emanates from your father’s lips, my child. Why do you rise in judgment on me? Is not the repugnance I feel a counsel from on High? I am perhaps saving you from misfortune.”

“The misfortune would be that he should not love me.”

“Always he!”

“Yes, always,” she said. “He is my life, my joy, my thought. Even if I obeyed you, he would be always in my heart. If you forbid me to marry him, will it not make me hate you?”

“You love us no longer!” cried Piombo.

“Oh!” said Ginevra, shaking her head.

“Well, then, forget him. Be faithful to us. After us . . . you understand . . .”

“Father, would you make me wish that you were dead?” cried Ginevra.

“I shall outlive you; children who do not honor their parents die early,” cried her father at the utmost pitch of exasperation.

“All the more reason for marrying soon and being happy,” said she.

This coolness, this force of argument, brought Piombo’s agitation to a crisis; the blood rushed violently to his head, his face turned purple. Ginevra shuddered; she flew like a bird on to her father’s knees, threw her arms around his neck, stroked his hair, and exclaimed, quite overcome—

"Oh, yes, let me die first! I could not survive you, my dear, kind father."

"Oh, my Ginevra, my foolish Ginevretta!" answered Pionbo, whose rage melted under this caress as an icicle melts in the sunshine.

"It was time you should put an end to the matter," said the Baroness in a broken voice.

"Poor mother!"

"Ah, Ginevretta, mia Ginevra bella!"

And the father played with his daughter as if she were a child of six; he amused himself with undoing the waving tresses of her hair and dancing her on his knee; there was dotage in his demonstrations of tenderness. Presently his daughter scolded him as she kissed him, and tried, half in jest, to get leave to bring Louis to the house; but, jesting too, her father refused. She sulked, and recovered herself, and sulked again; then, at the end of the evening, she was only too glad to have impressed on her father the ideas of her love for Louis and of a marriage ere long.

Next day she said no more about it; she went later to the studio and returned early; she was more affectionate to her father than she had ever been, and showed herself grateful, as if to thank him for the consent to her marriage he seemed to give by silence. In the evening she played and sang for a long time, and exclaimed now and then, "This nocturne requires a man's voice!" She was an Italian, and that says everything.

A week later her mother beckoned her; Ginevra went, and then in her ear she whispered, "I have persuaded your father to receive him."

"Oh, mother! you make me very happy."

So that afternoon, Ginevra had the joy of coming home to her father's house leaning on Louis's arm. The poor officer came out of his hiding-place for the second time. Ginevra's active intervention addressed to the Duc de Feltre, then Minister of War, had been crowned with perfect success. Louis had just been reinstated as an officer on the reserve list. This was a very long step towards a prosperous future.



Informed by Ginevra of all the difficulties he would meet with in the Baron, the young officer dared not confess his dread of failing to please him. This man, so brave in adversity, so bold on the field of battle, quaked as he thought of entering the Piombos' drawing-room. Ginevra felt him tremble, and this emotion, of which their happiness was the first cause, was to her a fresh proof of his love.

"How pale you are!" said she, as they reached the gate of the hôtel.

"Oh, Ginevra! If my life alone were at stake——"

Though Bartolomeo had been informed by his wife of this official introduction of his daughter's lover, he did not rise to meet him, but remained in the armchair he usually occupied, and the severity of his countenance was icy.

"Father," said Ginevra, "I have brought you a gentleman whom you will no doubt be pleased to see. M. Louis, a soldier who fought quite close to the Emperor at Mont-Saint-Jean——"

The Baron rose, cast a furtive glance at Louis, and said in a sardonic tone——

"Monsieur wears no orders?"

"I no longer wear the Legion of Honor," replied Louis bashfully, and he humbly remained standing.

Ginevra, hurt by her father's rudeness, brought forward a chair. The officer's reply satisfied the old Republican. Mme. Piombo, seeing that her husband's brows were recovering their natural shape, said, to revive the conversation, "Monsieur is wonderfully like Nina Porta. Do not you think that he has quite the face of a Porta?"

"Nothing can be more natural," replied the young man, on whom Piombo's flaming eyes were fixed. "Nina was my sister."

"You are Luigi Porta?" asked the old man.

"Yes."

Bartolomeo di Piombo rose, tottered, was obliged to lean on a chair, and looked at his wife. Elisa Piombo came up to him; then the two old folks silently left the room, arm in arm, with a look of horror at their daughter. Luigi Porta, quite bewildered, gazed at Ginevra, who turned as white as a marble

statue, and remained with her eyes fixed on the door where her father and mother had disappeared. There was something so solemn in her silence and their retreat, that, for the first time in his life perhaps, a feeling of fear came over him. She clasped her hands tightly together, and said in a voice so choked that it would have been inaudible to anyone but a lover, "How much woe in one word!"

"In the name of our love, what have I said?" asked Luigi Porta.

"My father has never told me our deplorable history," she replied. "And when we left Corsica I was too young to know anything about it."

"Is it a vendetta?" asked Luigi, trembling.

"Yes. By questioning my mother I learnt that the Porta had killed my brothers and burnt down our house. My father then massacred all your family. How did you survive, you whom he thought he had tied to the posts of a bed before setting fire to the house?"

"I do not know," replied Luigi. "When I was six I was taken to Genoa, to an old man named Colonna. No account of my family was ever given to me; I only knew that I was an orphan, and penniless. Colonna was like a father to me; I bore his name till I entered the army; then, as I needed papers to prove my identity, old Colonna told me that, helpless as I was, and hardly more than a child, I had enemies. He made me promise to take the name of Luigi only, to evade them."

"Fly, fly, Luigi," cried Ginevra. "Yet, stay; I must go with you. So long as you are in my father's house you are safe. As soon as you quit it, take care of yourself. You will go from one danger to another. My father has two Corsicans in his service, and if he does not threaten your life they will."

"Ginevra," he said, "and must this hatred exist between us?"

She smiled sadly and bowed her head. But she soon raised it again with a sort of pride, and said, "Oh, Luigi, our feelings must be very pure and true that I should have the strength to walk in the path I am entering on. But

it is for the sake of happiness which will last as long as life, is it not?"

Luigi answered only with a smile, and pressed her hand. The girl understood that only a great love could at such a moment scorn mere protestations. This calm and conscientious expression of Luigi's feelings seemed to speak for their strength and permanence. The fate of the couple was thus sealed. Ginevra foresaw many painful contests to be fought out, but the idea of deserting Louis—an idea which had perhaps floated before her mind—at once vanished. His, henceforth and forever, she suddenly dragged him away and out of the house with a sort of violence, and did not quit him till they reached the house where Servin had taken a humble lodging for him.

When she returned to her father's house she had assumed the serenity which comes of a strong resolve. No change of manner revealed any uneasiness. She found her parents ready to sit down to dinner, and she looked at them with eyes devoid of defiance, and full of sweetness. She saw that her old mother had been weeping; at the sight of her red eyelids for a moment her heart failed her, but she hid her emotion. Piombo seemed to be a prey to anguish too keen, too concentrated to be shown by ordinary means of expression. The servants waited on a meal which no one ate. A horror of food is one of the symptoms indicative of a great crisis of the soul. All three rose without any one of them having spoken a word. When Ginevra was seated in the great, solemn drawing-room, between her father and mother, Piombo tried to speak, but he found no voice; he tried to walk about, but found no strength; he sat down again and rang the bell.

"Pietro," said he to the servant at last, "light the fire, I am cold."

Ginevra was shocked, and looked anxiously at her father. The struggle he was going through must be frightful; his face looked quite changed. Ginevra knew the extent of the danger that threatened her, but she did not tremble; while the glances that Bartolomeo cast at his daughter seemed to proclaim that he was at this moment in fear of the character

whose violence was his own work. Between these two everything must be in excess. And the certainty of the possible change of feeling between the father and daughter filled the Baroness's face with an expression of terror.

"Ginevra, you love the enemy of your family," said Piombo at last, not daring to look at his daughter.

"That is true," she replied.

"You must choose between him and us. Our vendetta is part of ourselves. If you do not espouse my cause, you are not of my family."

"My choice is made," said Ginevra, in a steady voice.

His daughter's calmness misled Bartolomeo.

"Oh, my dear daughter!" cried the old man, whose eyelids were moist with tears, the first, the only tears he ever shed in his life.

"I shall be his wife," she said abruptly.

Bartolomeo could not see for a moment; but he recovered himself and replied, "This marriage shall never be so long as I live. I will never consent." Ginevra kept silence. "But, do you understand," the Baron went on, "that Luigi is the son of the man who killed your brothers?"

"He was six years old when the crime was committed; he must be innocent of it," she answered.

"A Porta!" cried Bartolomeo.

"But how could I share this hatred?" said the girl eagerly.

"Did you bring me up in the belief that a Porta was a monster? Could I imagine that even one was left of those you had killed? Is it not in nature that you should make your vendetta give way to my feelings?"

"A Porta!" repeated Piombo. "If his father had found you then in your bed, you would not be alive now. He would have dealt you a hundred deaths."

"Possibly," she said. "But his son has given me more than life. To see Luigi is a happiness without which I cannot live. Luigi has revealed to me the world of feeling. I have, perhaps, seen even handsomer faces than his, but none ever charmed me so much. I have, perhaps, heard voices—no, no, never one so musical! Luigi loves me. He shall be my husband."

"Never!" said Piombo. "Ginevra, I would sooner see you in your coffin!"

The old man rose, and paced the room with hurried strides, uttering fierce words, with pauses between that betrayed all his indignation.

"You think, perhaps, that you can bend my will? Undeceive yourself. I will not have a Porta for my son-in-law. That is my decision. Never speak of the matter again. I am Bartolomeo di Piombo, do you hear, Ginevra?"

"Do you attach any mysterious meaning to the words?" she coldly asked.

"They mean that I have a dagger, and that I do not fear the justice of men. We Corsicans settle such matters with God."

"Well," said the girl, "I am Ginevra di Piombo, and I declare that in six months I will be Luigi Porta's wife.—You are a tyrant, father," she added, after an ominous pause.

Bartolomeo clenched his fists, and struck the marble chimney-shelf.

"Ah! we are in Paris!" he muttered.

He said no more, but folded his arms and bowed his head on his breast; nor did he say another word the whole evening. Having asserted her will, the girl affected the most complete indifference; she sat down to the piano, sang, played the most charming music, with a grace and feeling that proclaimed her perfect freedom of mind, triumphing over her father, whose brow showed no relenting. The old man deeply felt this tacit insult, and at that moment gathered the bitter fruits of the education he had given his daughter. Respect is a barrier which protects the parents and the children alike, sparing those much sorrow, and these remorse.

The next day, as Ginevra was going out at the hour when she usually went to the studio, she found the door of the house closed upon her; but she soon devised means for informing Luigi Porta of her father's severity. A waiting woman, who could not read, carried to the young officer a letter written by Ginevra. For five days the lovers contrived to correspond, thanks to the plots that young people of twenty can always contrive.

The father and daughter rarely spoke to each other. Both had in the bottom of their hearts an element of hatred; they suffered, but in pride and silence. Knowing well how strong were the bonds of love that tied them to each other, they tried to wrench them asunder, but without success. No sweet emotion ever came, as it had been wont, to give light to Bartolomeo's severe features when he gazed at his Ginevra, and there was something savage in her expression when she looked at her father. Reproach sat on her innocent brow; she gave herself up, indeed, to thoughts of happiness, but remorse sometimes dimmed her eyes. It was not, indeed, difficult to divine that she would never enjoy in peace a felicity which made her parents unhappy. In Bartolomeo, as in his daughter, all the irresolution arising from their native goodness of heart was doomed to shipwreck on their fierce pride and the revengeful spirit peculiar to the Corsicans. They encouraged each other in their wrath, and shut their eyes to the future. Perhaps, too, each fancied that the other would yield.

On Ginevra's birthday, her mother, heart-broken at this disunion, which was assuming a serious aspect, planned to reconcile the father and daughter by an appeal to the memories of this anniversary. They were all three sitting in Bartolomeo's room. Ginevra guessed her mother's purpose from the hesitation written in her face, and she smiled sadly. At this instant a servant announced two lawyers, accompanied by several witnesses, who all came into the room. Bartolomeo stared at the men, whose cold, set faces were in themselves an insult to souls so fevered as those of the three principal actors in this scene. The old man turned uneasily to his daughter, and saw on her face a smile of triumph which led him to suspect some catastrophe; but he affected, as savages do, to preserve a deceitful rigidity, while he looked at the two lawyers with a sort of apathetic curiosity. At a gesture of invitation from the old man the visitors took seats.

"Monsieur is no doubt Baron di Piombo?" said the elder of the two lawyers.

Bartolomeo bowed. The lawyer gave his head a little

jerk, looked at Ginevra with the sly expression of a bailiff nabbing a debtor; then he took out his snuff-box, opened it, and, taking a pinch of snuff, absorbed it in little sniffs while considering the opening words of his discourse; and while pronouncing them he made constant pauses, an oratorical effect which a dash in printing represents very imperfectly.

"Monsieur," said he, "I am M. Roguin, notary to mademoiselle, your daughter, and we are here—my colleague and I—to carry out the requirements of the law, and—to put an end to the divisions which—as it would seem—have arisen—between you and mademoiselle, your daughter—on the question—of—her—marriage with M. Luigi Porta." This speech, made in a pedantic style, seemed, no doubt, to M. Roguin much too fine to be understood all in a moment, and he stopped, while looking at Bartolomeo with an expression peculiar to men of business, and which is halfway between servility and familiarity. Lawyers are so much used to feign interest in the persons to whom they speak that their features at last assume a grimace which they can put on and off with their official *pallium*. This caricature of friendliness, so mechanical as to be easily detected, irritated Bartolomeo to such a pitch that it took all his self-control not to throw M. Roguin out of the window; a look of fury emphasized his wrinkles, and on seeing this the notary said to himself: "I am making an effect."

"But," he went on in a honeyed voice, "M. le Baron, on such occasions as these, our intervention must always, at first, be essentially conciliatory.—Have the kindness to listen to me.—It is in evidence that Mlle. Ginevra Piombo—has to-day—attained the age at which, after a 'respectful summons,' she may proceed to the solemnization of her marriage—notwithstanding that her parents refuse their consent. Now—it is customary in families—which enjoy a certain consideration—which move in society—and preserve their dignity—people, in short, to whom it is important not to let the public into the secret of their differences—and who also do not wish to do themselves an injury by blighting the future lives of a young husband and wife—for that is doing themselves an injury. It is the custom, I was saying—in such highly re-

spectable families—not to allow the serving of such a summons—which must be—which always is a record of a dispute—which at last ceases to exist. For as soon, monsieur, as a young lady has recourse to a ‘respectful summons’ she proclaims a determination so obstinate—that her father—and her mother—” he added, turning to the Baroness, “can have no further hope of seeing her follow their advice.—Hence the parental prohibition being nullified—in the first place by this fact—and also by the decision of the law—it is always the case that a wise father, after finally remonstrating with his child, allows her the liberty——”

M. Roguin paused, perceiving that he might talk on for two hours without extracting an answer; and he also felt a peculiar agitation as he looked at the man he was trying to convince. An extraordinary change had come over Bartolomeo’s countenance. All its lines were set, giving him an expression of indescribable cruelty, and he glared at the lawyer like a tiger. The Baroness sat mute and passive. Ginevra, calm and resolute, was waiting; she knew that the notary’s voice was stronger than hers, and she seemed to have made up her mind to keep silence. At the moment when Roguin ceased speaking, the scene was so terrible that the witnesses, as strangers, trembled; never, perhaps, had such a silence weighed on them. The lawyers looked at each other as if in consultation, then they rose and went to the window.

“Did you ever come across clients made to this pattern?” asked Roguin of his colleague.

“There is nothing to be got out of him,” said the younger man. “In your place I should read the summons and nothing more. The old man is no joke; he is choleric, and you will gain nothing by trying to discuss matters with him.”

M. Roguin therefore read aloud from a sheet of stamped paper a summons ready drawn up, and coldly asked Bartolomeo what his reply was.

“Are there laws in France, then, that upset a father’s authority?” asked the Corsican.

“Monsieur——” said Roguin, smoothly.



"That snatch a child from her father?"

"Monsieur——"

"That rob an old man of his last consolation?"

"Monsieur, your daughter belongs to you only so long——"

"That kill her?"

"Monsieur, allow me."

There is nothing more hideous than the cold-blooded and close reasoning of a lawyer in the midst of such scenes of passion as they are usually mixed up with. The faces which Piombo saw seemed to him to have escaped from hell; his cold and concentrated rage knew no bounds at the moment when his little opponent's calm and almost piping voice uttered that fatal, "Allow me." He sprang at a long dagger which hung from a nail over the chimney-piece, and rushed at his daughter. The younger of the two lawyers and one of the witnesses threw themselves between him and Ginevra; but Bartolomeo brutally knocked them over, showing them a face of fire and glowing eyes which seemed more terrible than the flash of the dagger. When Ginevra found herself face to face with her father she looked at him steadily with a glance of triumph, went slowly towards him, and knelt down.

"No, no! I cannot!" he exclaimed, flinging away the weapon with such force that it stuck fast in the wainscot.

"Mercy, then, mercy!" said she. "You hesitate to kill me, but you refuse me life. Oh, father, I never loved you so well—but give me Luigi. I ask your consent on my knees; a daughter may humble herself to her father. My Luigi, or I must die!"

The violent excitement that choked her prevented her saying more; she found no voice; her convulsive efforts plainly showed that she was between life and death. Bartolomeo roughly pushed her away.

"Go," he said, "the wife of Luigi Porta cannot be a Piombo. I no longer have a daughter! I cannot bring myself to curse you, but I give you up. You have now no father. My Ginevra Piombo is buried then!" he exclaimed in a deep tone, as he clutched at his heart.—Go, I say,

wretched girl," he went on after a moment's silence. "Go, and never let me see you again."

He took Ginevra by the arm, and in silence led her out of the house.

"Luigi!" cried Ginevra, as she went into the humble room where the officer was lodged, "my Luigi, we have no fortune but our love."

"We are richer than all the kings of the earth," he replied.

"My father and mother have cast me out," said she with deep melancholy.

"I will love you for them."

"Shall we be very happy?" she cried, with a gayety that had something terrible in it.

"And forever!" he answered, clasping her to his heart.

On the day following that on which Ginevra had quitted her father's house, she went to beg Mme. Servin to grant her protection and shelter till the time, fixed by law, when she could be married to Luigi. There began her apprenticeship to the troubles which the world strews in the way of those who do not obey its rules. Mme. Servin, who was greatly distressed at the injury that Ginevra's adventure had done the painter, received the fugitive coldly, and explained to her with circumspect politeness that she was not to count on her support. Too proud to insist, but amazed at such selfishness, to which she was unaccustomed, the young Corsican went to lodge in a furnished house as near as possible to Luigi's. The son of the Portas spent all his days at the feet of his beloved; his youthful love, and the purity of his mind, dispersed the clouds which her father's reprobation had settled on the banished daughter's brow; and he painted the future as so fair that she ended by smiling, though she could not forget her parents' severity.

One morning the maid of the house brought up to her several trunks containing dress-stuffs, linen, and a quantity of things needful for a young woman settling for the first time. In this she recognized the foreseeing kindness of a mother; for as she examined these gifts, she found a purse into which the Baroness had put some money belonging to

Ginevra, adding all her own savings. With the money was a letter, in which she implored her daughter to give up her fatal purpose of marrying, if there were yet time. She had been obliged, she said, to take unheard-of precautions to get this small assistance conveyed to Ginevra; she begged her not to accuse her of hardness if henceforth she left her neglected; she feared she could do no more for her; she blessed her, hoped she might find happiness in this fatal marriage if she persisted, and assured her that her one thought was of her beloved daughter. At this point tears had blotted out many words of the letter.

"Oh, mother!" cried Ginevra, quite overcome.

She felt a longing to throw herself at her mother's feet, to see her, to breathe the blessed air of home; she was on the point of rushing off when Luigi came in. She looked at him, and filial affection vanished, her tears were dried, she could not find it in her to leave the unhappy and loving youth. To be the sole hope of a noble soul, to love and to desert it—such a sacrifice is treason of which no young heart is capable. Ginevra had the generosity to bury her grief at the bottom of her soul.

At last the day of their wedding came. Ginevra found no one near her. Luigi took advantage of the moment when she was dressing to go in search of the necessary witnesses to their marriage act. These were very good people. One of them, an old quartermaster of hussars, had, when in the army, found himself under such obligations to Luigi as an honest man never forgets; he had become a job-master, and had several hackney carriages. The other, a builder, was the proprietor of the house where the young couple were to lodge. Each of these brought a friend, and all four came with Luigi to fetch the bride. Unaccustomed as they were to social grimacing, seeing nothing extraordinary in the service they were doing to Luigi, these men were decently but quite plainly dressed, and there was nothing to proclaim the gay escort of a wedding. Ginevra herself was very simply clad, to be in keeping with her fortune; but, nevertheless, there was something so noble and impressive in her beauty that at the sight of her the words died on the lips of the

good folks who had been prepared to pay her some compliment; they bowed respectfully, and she bowed in return; they looked at her in silence, and could only admire her. Joy can only express itself among equals. So, as fate would have it, all was gloomy and serious around the lovers; there was nothing to reflect their happiness.

The church and the Mairie were not far away. The two Corsicans, followed by the four witnesses required by law, decided to go on foot, with a simplicity which robbed this great event of social life of all parade. In the courtyard of the Mairie they found a crowd of carriages, which announced a numerous party within. They went upstairs and entered a large room, where the couples who were to be made happy on this particular day were awaiting the Maire of that quarter of Paris with considerable impatience. Ginevra sat down by Luigi on the end of a long bench, and their witnesses remained standing for lack of seats. Two brides, pompously arrayed in white, loaded with ribbons and lace and pearls, and crowned with bunches of orange-blossom of which the sheeny buds quivered under their veils, were surrounded by their families and accompanied by their mothers, to whom they turned with looks at once timid and satisfied; every eye reflected their happiness, and every face seemed to exhale benedictions. Fathers, witnesses, brothers, and sisters were coming and going like a swarm of insects playing in a sunbeam which soon must vanish. Everyone seemed to understand the preciousness of this brief hour in life when the heart stands poised between two hopes—the wishes of the past, the promise of the future.

At this sight Ginevra felt her heart swell, and she pressed Luigi's arm. He gave her a look, and a tear rose to the young man's eye; he never saw more clearly than at that moment all that his Ginevra had sacrificed for him. That rare tear made the young girl forget the forlorn position in which she stood. Love poured treasures of light between the lovers, who from that moment saw nothing but each other in the midst of the confusion.

Their witnesses, indifferent to the ceremonial, were quietly discussing business matters.

"Oats are very dear," said the quartermaster to the mason.

"They have not yet gone up so high as plaster in proportion," said the builder. And they walked round the large room.

"What a lot of time we are losing here!" exclaimed the mason, putting a huge silver watch back into his pocket.

Luigi and Ginevra, clinging to each other, seemed to be but one person. A poet would certainly have admired these two heads, full of the same feeling, alike in coloring, melancholy and silent in the presence of the two buzzing wedding-parties, of four excited families sparkling with diamonds and flowers, and full of gayety which seemed a mere effervescence. All the joys of which these loud and gorgeous groups made a display, Luigi and Ginevra kept buried at the bottom of their hearts. On one side was the coarse clamor of pleasure; on the other the delicate silence of happy souls: earth and heaven.

But Ginevra trembled, and could not altogether shake off her woman's weakness. Superstitious, as Italians are, she regarded this contrast as an omen, and in the depths of her heart she harbored a feeling of dread, as unconquerable as her love itself.

Suddenly an official in livery threw open the double doors; silence fell, and his voice sounded like a yelp as he called out the names of M. Luigi Porta and Mlle. Ginevra Piombo. This incident caused the pair some embarrassment. The celebrity of the name of Piombo attracted attention; the spectators looked about them for a wedding-party which must surely be a splendid one. Ginevra rose; her eyes, thunderous with pride, subdued the crowd, she took Luigi's arm, and went forward with a firm step, followed by the witnesses. A murmur of astonishment which rapidly grew louder, and whispering on all sides, reminded Ginevra that the world was calling her to account for her parents' absence. Her father's curse seemed to be pursuing her.

"Wait for the families of the bride and bridegroom," said the Maire to the clerk, who at once began to read the contracts.

"The father and mother enter a protest," said the clerk indifferently.

"On both sides?" asked the Maire.

"The man is an orphan."

"Where are the witnesses?"

"They are here," said the clerk, pointing to the four motionless and silent men who stood like statues, with their arms crossed.

"But if the parents protest——?" said the Maire.

"The 'respectful summons' has been presented in due form," replied the man, rising to place the various documents in the functionary's hands.

This discussion in an office seemed to brand them, and in a few words told a whole history. The hatred of the Porta and the Piombo, all these terrible passions, were thus recorded on a page of a register, as the annals of a nation may be inscribed on a tombstone in a few lines, nay, even in a single name: Robespierre or Napoleon. Ginevra was trembling. Like the dove crossing the waters, which had no rest for her foot but in the ark, her eyes could take refuge only in Luigi's, for all else was cold and sad. The Maire had a stern, disapproving look, and his clerk stared at the couple with ill-natured curiosity. Nothing ever had less the appearance of a festivity. Like all the other events of human life when they are stripped of their accessories, it was a simple thing in itself, immense in its idea.

After some questions, to which they replied, the Maire muttered a few words, and then, having signed their names in the register, Luigi and Ginevra were man and wife. The young Corsicans, whose union had all the poetry which genius has consecrated in Romeo and Juliet, went away between two lines of jubilant relations to whom they did not belong, and who were out of patience at the delay caused by a marriage apparently so forlorn. When the girl found herself in the courtyard and under the open sky, a deep sigh broke from her very heart.

"Oh, will a whole life of love and devotion suffice to repay my Ginevra for her courage and tenderness?" said Luigi.

At these words, spoken with tears of joy, the bride forgot all her suffering, for she had suffered in showing herself to the world claiming a happiness which her parents refused to sanction.

"Why do men try to come between us?" she said, with a simplicity of feeling that enchanted Luigi.

Gladness made them more light-hearted. They saw neither the sky, nor the earth, nor the houses, and flew on wings to the church. At last they found themselves in a small, dark chapel, and in front of a humble altar where an old priest married them. There, as at the Mairie, they were pursued by the two weddings that persecuted them with their splendor. The church, filled with friends and relations, rang with the noise made by carriages, beadles, porters, and priests. Altars glittered with ecclesiastical magnificence; the crowns of orange-blossom that decked the statues of the Virgin seemed quite new. Nothing was to be seen but flowers with perfumes, gleaming tapers, and velvet cushions embroidered with gold. God seemed to have a share in this rapture of a day.

When the symbol of eternal union was to be held above the heads of Luigi and Ginevra—the yoke of white satin which for some is so soft, so bright, so light, and for the greater number is made of lead—the priest looked round in vain for two young boys to fill the happy office; two of the witnesses took their place. The priest gave the couple a hasty discourse on the dangers of life, and on the duties they must one day inculcate in their children, and he here took occasion to insinuate a reflection on the absence of Ginevra's parents; then having united them in the presence of God, as the Maire had united them in the presence of the Law, he ended the Mass, and left them.

"God bless them," said Vergniaud to the mason at the church door. "Never were two creatures better made for each other. That girl's parents are wretches. I know no braver soldier than Colonel Luigi! If all the world had behaved as he did, *L'autre*<sup>1</sup> would still be with us."

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon.

The soldier's blessing, the only one breathed for them this day, fell like balm on Ginevra's heart.

They all parted with shaking of hands, and Luigi cordially thanked his landlord.

"Good-by, old fellow," said Luigi to the quartermaster. "And thank you."

"At your service, colonel, soul and body, horses and chaises—all that is mine is yours."

"How well he loves you!" said Ginevra.

Luigi eagerly led his wife home to the house they were to live in; they soon reached the modest apartment, and there, when the door was closed, Luigi took her in his arms, exclaiming, "Oh, my Ginevra—for you are mine now—here is our real festival! Here," he went on, "all will smile on us."

Together they went through the three rooms which composed their dwelling. The entrance hall served as drawing-room and dining-room. To the right was a bedroom, to the left a sort of large closet which Luigi had arranged for his beloved wife, where she found easels, her paint-box, some casts, models, lay figures, pictures, portfolios, in short, all the apparatus of an artist.

"Here I shall work," said she, with childlike glee.

She looked for a long time at the paper and the furniture, constantly turning to Luigi to thank him, for there was a kind of magnificence in this humble retreat; a bookcase contained Ginevra's favorite books, and there was a piano. She sat down on an ottoman, drew Luigi to her side, and clasping his hand, "You have such good taste," said she, in a caressing tone.

"Your words make me very happy," he replied.

"But, come, let us see everything," said Ginevra, from whom Luigi had kept the secret of this little home.

They went into a bridal chamber that was as fresh and white as a maiden.

"Oh! come away," said Luigi, laughing.

"But I must see everything," and Ginevra imperiously went on, examining all the furniture with the curiosity of an antiquary studying a medal. She touched the silk stuff and



scrutinized everything with the childlike delight of a bride turning over the treasures of the *corbeille* brought her by her husband.

"We have begun by ruining ourselves," she said in a half-glad, half-regretful tone.

"It is true; all my arrears of pay are there," replied Luigi. "I sold it to a good fellow named Gigonnet."

"Why?" she asked, in a reproachful voice, which betrayed, however, a secret satisfaction. "Do you think I should be less happy under a bare roof? Still," she went on, "it is all very pretty, and it is ours!"

Luigi looked at her with such enthusiasm that she cast down her eyes, and said, "Let us see the rest."

Above these three rooms, in the attics, were a workroom for Luigi, a kitchen, and a servant's room. Ginevra was content with her little domain, though the view was limited by the high wall of a neighboring house, and the courtyard on which the rooms looked was gloomy. But the lovers were so glad of heart, hope so beautified the future, that they would see nothing but enchantment in their mysterious dwelling. They were buried in this huge house, lost in the immensity of Paris, like two pearls in their shell, in the bosom of the deep sea. For anyone else it would have been a prison; to them it was Paradise.

The first days of their married life were given to love; it was too difficult for them to devote themselves at once to work, and they could not resist the fascination of their mutual passion. Luigi would recline for hours at his wife's feet, admiring the color of her hair, the shape of her forehead, the exquisite setting of her eyes, the purity and whiteness of the arched brow beneath which they slowly rose or fell, expressing the happiness of satisfied love. Ginevra stroked her Luigi's locks, never tiring of gazing at what she called, in one of her own phrases, the *beltà folgorante* of the young man, and his delicately cut features; always fascinated by the dignity of his manners, while always charming him by the grace of her own. They played like children with the merest trifles, these trifles always brought them back to their passion, and they ceased playing only to lapse into

the day dreams of *far niente*. An air sung by Ginevra would reproduce for them the exquisite hues of their love.

Or, matching their steps as they had matched their souls, they wandered about the country, finding their love in everything, in the flowers, in the sky, in the heart of the fiery glow of the setting sun; they read it even in the changing clouds that were tossed on the winds. No day was ever like the last, their love continued to grow because it was true. In a very few days they had proved each other, and had instinctively perceived that their souls were of such a temper that their inexhaustible riches seemed to promise ever new joys for the future. This was love in all its fresh candor, with its endless prattle, its unfinished sentences, its long silences, its Oriental restfulness and ardor. Luigi and Ginevra had wholly understood love. Is not love like the sea, which, seen superficially or in haste, is accused of monotony by vulgar minds, while certain privileged beings can spend all their life admiring it and finding in it changeeful phenomena which delight them?

One day, however, prudence dragged the young couple from their Garden of Eden; they must work for their living. Ginevra, who had a remarkable talent for copying pictures, set to work to produce copies, and formed a connection among dealers. Luigi, too, eagerly sought some occupation; but it was difficult for a young officer, whose talents were limited to a thorough knowledge of tactics, to find any employment in Paris. At last, one day when, weary of his vain efforts, he felt despair in his soul at seeing that the whole burden of providing for their existence rested on Ginevra, it occurred to him that he might earn something by his handwriting, which was beautiful. With a perseverance, of which his wife had set the example, he went to ask work of the attorneys, the notaries, and the pleaders of Paris. The frankness of his manners and his painful situation greatly interested people in his favor, and he got enough copying to be obliged to employ youths under him. Presently he took work on a larger scale. The income derived from this office-work and the price of Ginevra's paintings

put the young household on a footing of comfort, which they were proud of as the fruit of their own industry.

This was the sunniest period of their life. The days glided swiftly by between work and the happiness of love. In the evening after working hard they found themselves happy in Ginevra's cell. Music then consoled them for their fatigues. No shade of melancholy ever clouded the young wife's features, and she never allowed herself to utter a lament. She could always appear to her Luigi with a smile on her lips and a light in her eyes. Each cherished a ruling thought which would have made them take pleasure in the hardest toil: Ginevra told herself she was working for Luigi, and Luigi for Ginevra. Sometimes, in her husband's absence, the young wife would think of the perfect joy it would have been if this life of love might have been spent in the sight of her father and mother; then she would sink into deep melancholy, and feel all the pangs of remorse; dark pictures would pass like shadows before her fancy; she would see her old father alone, or her mother weeping in the evenings, and hiding her tears from the inexorable Piombo. Those two grave, white heads would suddenly rise up before her, and she fancied she would never see them again but in the fantastical light of memory. This idea haunted her like a presentiment.

She kept the anniversary of their wedding by giving her husband a portrait he had often wished for—that of his Ginevra. The young artist had never executed so remarkable a work. Apart from the likeness, which was perfect, the brilliancy of her beauty, the purity of her feelings, the happiness of love, were rendered with a kind of magic. The masterpiece was hung up with due ceremony.

They spent another year in the midst of comfort. The history of their life can be told in these words: "They were happy." No event occurred deserving to be related.

At the beginning of the winter of 1819 the picture-dealers advised Ginevra to bring them something else than copies, as, in consequence of the great competition, they could no longer sell them to advantage. Mme. Porta acknowledged the mistake she had made in not busying herself with genre

pictures which would have won her a name; she undertook to paint portraits; but she had to contend against a crowd of artists even poorer than herself. However, as Luigi and Ginevra had saved some money, they did not despair of the future. At the end of this same winter Luigi was working without ceasing. He, too, had to compete with rivals; the price of copying had fallen so low that he could no longer employ assistants, and was compelled to give up more time to his labor to earn the same amount. His wife had painted several pictures which were not devoid of merit, but dealers were scarcely buying even those of artists of repute. Ginevra offered them for almost nothing, and could not sell them.

The situation of the household was something terrible; the souls of the husband and wife floated in happiness, love loaded them with its treasures; poverty rose up like a skeleton in the midst of this harvest of joys, and they hid their alarms from each other. When Ginevra felt herself on the verge of tears as she saw Luigi suffering, she heaped caresses on him; Luigi, in the same way, hid the blackest care in his heart, while expressing the fondest devotion to Ginevra. They sought some compensation for their woes in the enthusiasm of their feelings, and their words, their joys, their playfulness, were marked by a kind of frenzy. They were alarmed at the future. What sentiment is there to compare in strength with a passion which must end to-morrow—killed by death or necessity? When they spoke of their poverty, they felt the need of deluding each other, and snatched at the smallest hope with equal eagerness.

One night Ginevra sought in vain for Luigi at her side, and got up quite frightened. A pale gleam reflected from the dingy wall of the little courtyard led her to guess that her husband sat up to work at night. Luigi waited till his wife was asleep to go up to his workroom. The clock struck four. Ginevra went back to bed and feigned sleep; Luigi came back, overwhelmed by fatigue and want of sleep, and Ginevra gazed sadly at the handsome face on which labor and anxiety had already traced some lines.

"And it is for me that he spends the night in writing," she thought, and she wept.

An idea came to dry her tears: she would imitate Luigi. That same day she went to a rich print-seller, and by the help of a letter of recommendation to him that she had obtained from Élie Magus, a picture-dealer, she got some work in coloring prints. All day she painted and attended to her household cares, then at night she colored prints. These two beings, so tenderly in love, got into bed only to get out of it again. Each pretended to sleep, and out of devotion to the other stole away as soon as one had deceived the other. One night Luigi, knocked over by a sort of fever caused by work, of which the burden was beginning to crush him, threw open the window of his workroom to inhale the fresh morning air, and shake off his pain, when, happening to look down, he saw the light thrown on the wall by Ginevra's lamp; the unhappy man guessed the truth; he went downstairs, walking softly, and discovered his wife in her studio coloring prints.

"Oh, Ginevra," he exclaimed.

She started convulsively in her chair, and turned scarlet.

"Could I sleep while you were wearing yourself out with work?" said she.

"But I alone have a right to work so hard."

"And can I sit idle?" replied the young wife, whose eyes filled with tears, "when I know that every morsel of bread almost costs us a drop of your blood? I should die if I did not add my efforts to yours. Ought we not to have everything in common, pleasures and pains?"

"She is cold!" cried Luigi, in despair. "Wrap your shawl closer over your chest, my Ginevra, the night is damp and chilly."

They went to the window, the young wife leaning her head on her beloved husband's shoulder, he with his arm round her, sunk in deep silence, and watching the sky which dawn was slowly lighting up.

Gray clouds swept across in quick succession, and the east grew brighter by degrees.

"See," said Ginevra, "it is a promise—we shall be happy."

"Yes, in heaven!" replied Luigi, with a bitter smile.

"Oh, Ginevra! you who deserved all the riches of earth——"

"I have your heart!" said she in a glad tone.

"Ah, and I do not complain," he went on, clasping her closely to him. And he covered the delicate face with kisses; it was already beginning to lose the freshness of youth, but the expression was so tender and sweet that he could never look at it without feeling comforted.

"How still!" said Ginevra. "I enjoy sitting late, my dearest. The majesty of night is really contagious; it is impressive, inspiring; there is something strangely solemn in the thought: all sleeps, but I am awake."

"Oh, my Ginevra, I feel, not for the first time, the refined grace of your soul—but, see, this is daybreak, come and sleep."

"Yes," said she, "if I am not the only one to sleep. I was miserable indeed the night when I discovered that my Luigi was awake and at work without me."

The valor with which the young people defied misfortune for some time found a reward. But the event which usually crowns the joys of a household was destined to be fatal to them. Ginevra gave birth to a boy who, to use a common phrase, was as beautiful as the day. The feeling of motherhood doubled the young creature's strength. Luigi borrowed money to defray the expenses of her confinement. Thus, just at first, she did not feel all the painfulness of their situation, and the young parents gave themselves up to the joy of rearing a child. This was their last gleam of happiness. Like two swimmers who unite their forces to stem a current, the Corsicans at first struggled bravely; but sometimes they gave themselves up to an apathy resembling the torpor that precedes death, and they soon were obliged to sell their little treasures.

Poverty suddenly stood before them, not hideous, but humbly attired, almost pleasant to endure; there was nothing appalling in her voice; she did not bring despair with her, nor specters, nor squalor, but she made them forget the traditions and the habit of comfort; she broke the main-springs of pride. Then came misery in all its horror, reckless of her rags, and trampling every human feeling under foot. Seven or eight months after the birth of little Barto-

lomeo it would have been difficult to recognize the original of the beautiful portrait, the sole adornment of their bare room, in the mother who was suckling a sickly baby. Without any fire in bitter winter weather, Ginevra saw the soft outlines of her face gradually disappear, her cheeks became as white as porcelain, her eyes colorless, as though the springs of life were drying up in her. And watching her starved and pallid infant, she suffered only in his young misery, while Luigi had not the heart even to smile at his boy.

"I have scoured Paris," he said in a hollow voice. "I know no one, and how can I dare beg of strangers? Vergniaud, the horse-breeder, my old comrade in Egypt, is implicated in some conspiracy, and has been sent to prison; besides, he had lent me all he had to lend. As to the landlord, he has not asked me for any rent for more than a year."

"But we do not want for anything," Ginevra gently answered, with an affectation of calmness.

"Each day brings some fresh difficulty," replied Luigi, with horror.

Luigi took all Ginevra's paintings, the portrait, some furniture which they yet could dispense with, and sold them all for a mere trifle; the money thus obtained prolonged their sufferings for a little while. During these dreadful days Ginevra showed the sublime heights of her character, and the extent of her resignation. She bore the inroads of suffering with stoical firmness. Her vigorous soul upheld her under all ills; with a weak hand she worked on by her dying child, fulfilled her household duties with miraculous activity, and was equal to everything. She was even happy when she saw on Luigi's lips a smile of surprise at the look of neatness she contrived to give to the one room to which they had been reduced.

"I have kept you a piece of bread, dear," she said one evening when he came in tired.

"And you?"

"I have dined, dear Luigi; I want nothing." And the sweet expression of her face, even more than her words, urged him to accept the food of which she had deprived herself. Luigi embraced her with one of the despairing kisses which

friends gave each other in 1793 as they mounted the scaffold together. In such moments as these two human creatures see each other heart to heart. Thus the unhappy Luigi, understanding at once that his wife was fasting, felt the fever that was undermining her; he shivered, and went out on the pretext of pressing business, for he would rather have taken the most insidious poison than escape death by eating the last morsel of bread in the house.

He wandered about Paris among the smart carriages, in the midst of the insulting luxury that is everywhere flaunted; he hurried past the shops of the money-changers where gold glitters in the window; finally, he determined to sell himself, to offer himself as a substitute for the conscription, hoping by this sacrifice to save Ginevra, and that during his absence she might be taken into favor again by Bartolomeo. So he went in search of one of the men who deal in these white slaves, and felt a gleam of happiness at recognizing in him an old officer of the Imperial Guard.

"For two days I have eaten nothing," he said, in a slow, weak voice. "My wife is dying of hunger, and never utters a complaint; she will die, I believe, with a smile on her lips. For pity's sake, old comrade," he added, with a forlorn smile, "pay for me in advance; I am strong, I have left the service, and I——"

The officer gave Luigi something on account of the sum he promised to get for him. The unhappy man laughed convulsively when he grasped a handful of gold pieces, and ran home as fast as he could go, panting, and exclaiming as he went, "Oh, my Ginevra—Ginevra!"

It was growing dark by the time he reached home. He went in softly, fearing to over-excite his wife, whom he had left so weak; the last pale rays of sunshine, coming in at the dormer window, fell on Ginevra's face. She was asleep in her chair with her baby at her breast.

"Wake up, my darling," said he, without noticing the attitude of the child, which seemed at this moment to have a supernatural glory.

On hearing his voice, the poor mother opened her eyes, met Luigi's look, and smiled; but Luigi gave a cry of terror.



He hardly recognized his half-crazed wife, to whom he showed the gold, with a gesture of savage vehemence.

Ginevra began to laugh mechanically, but suddenly she cried in a terrible voice, "Louis, the child is cold!"

She looked at the infant and fainted. Little Bartolomeo was dead.

Luigi took his wife in his arms, without depriving her of the child, which she clutched to her with incomprehensible strength, and after laying her on the bed he went out to call for help.

"Great Heaven!" he exclaimed to his landlord, whom he met on the stairs, "I have money, and my child is dead of hunger, and my wife is dying. Help us."

In despair he went back to his wife, leaving the worthy builder and various neighbors to procure whatever might relieve the misery of which till now they had known nothing, so carefully had the Corsicans concealed it out of a feeling of pride. Luigi had tossed the gold pieces on the floor, and was kneeling by the bed where his wife lay.

"Father, take charge of my son, who bears your name!" cried Ginevra in her delirium.

"Oh, my angel, be calm," said Luigi, kissing her, "better days await us!" His voice and embrace restored her to some composure.

"Oh, my Louis," she went on, looking at him with extraordinary fixity, "listen to me. I feel that I am dying. My death is quite natural. I have been suffering too much; and then happiness so great as mine had to be paid for. Yes, my Luigi, be comforted. I have been so happy that if I had to begin life again, I would again accept our lot. I am a bad mother; I weep for you even more than for my child.—My child!" she repeated in a full, deep voice. Two tears dropped from her dying eyes, and she suddenly clasped yet closer the little body she could not warm. "Give my hair to my father in memory of his Ginevra," she added. "Tell him that I never, never, accused him——"

Her head fell back on her husband's arm.

"No, no, you cannot die!" cried Luigi. "A doctor is coming. We have food. Your father will receive you into

favor. Prosperity is dawning on us. Stay with us, angel of beauty!"

But that faithful and loving heart was growing cold: Ginevra instinctively turned her eyes on the man she adored, though she was no longer conscious of anything; confused images rose before her mind, fast losing all memories of earth. She knew that Luigi was there, for she clung more and more tightly to his ice-cold hand, as if to hold herself up above a gulf into which she feared to fall.

"You are cold, dear," she said presently; "I will warm you."

She tried to lay her husband's hand over her heart, but she was dead. Two doctors, a priest, and some neighbors came in at this moment, bringing everything that was needful to save the lives of the young couple and to soothe their despair. At first these intruders made a good deal of noise, but when they were all in the room an appalling silence fell.

While this scene was taking place Bartolomeo and his wife were sitting in their old armchairs, each at one corner of the immense fireplace that warmed the great drawing-room of their mansion. The clock marked midnight. It was long since the old couple had slept well. At this moment they were silent, like two old folks in their second childhood, who look at everything and see nothing. The deserted room, to them full of memories, was feebly lighted by a single lamp fast dying out. But for the dancing flames on the hearth they would have been in total darkness. One of their friends had just left them, and the chair on which he had sat during his visit stood between the old people. Piombo had already cast more than one glance at this chair, and these glances, fraught with thoughts, followed each other like pangs of remorse, for the empty chair was Ginevra's. Elisa Piombo watched the expressions that passed across her husband's pale face. Though she was accustomed to guess the Corsican's feelings from the violent changes in his features, they were to-night by turns so threatening and so sad that she failed to read this inscrutable soul.

Was Bartolomeo yielding to the overwhelming memories

aroused by that chair? Was he pained at perceiving that it had been used by a stranger for the first time since his daughter's departure? Had the hour of mercy, the hour so long and vainly hoped for, struck at last?

These reflections agitated the heart of Elisa Piombo. For a moment her husband's face was so terrible that she quaked at having ventured on so innocent a device to give her an opportunity of speaking of Ginevra. At this instant the northerly blast flung the snowflakes against the shutters with such violence that the old people could hear their soft pelting. Ginevra's mother bent her head to hide her tears from her husband. Suddenly a sigh broke from the old man's heart; his wife looked at him; he was downcast. For the second time in three years she ventured to speak to him of his daughter.

"Supposing Ginevra were cold!" she exclaimed in an undertone. "Or perhaps she is hungry," she went on. The Corsican shed a tear. "She has a child, and cannot suckle it—her milk is dried up"—the mother added vehemently, with an accent of despair.

"Let her come, oh, let her come!" cried Piombo. "Oh, my darling child, you have conquered me."

The mother rose, as if to go to fetch her daughter. At this instant the door was flung open, and a man, whose face had lost all semblance of humanity, suddenly stood before them.

"Dead!—Our families were doomed to exterminate each other; for this is all that remains of her," he said, laying on the table Ginevra's long back hair.

The two old people started, as though they had been struck by a thunderbolt; they could not see Luigi.

"He has spared us a pistol shot, for he is dead," said Bartolomeo deliberately, as he looked on the ground.

PARIS, February 1831





